



# SURVIVORS

after suicide A Program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

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## Pass the Shadow

November 3rd, 1975, we drove into the driveway, my daughter Rachel and I. She, in the backseat, fresh from daycare. In the front with me the new Raggedy Ann book I planned to read her at bedtime.

The night did not work out as planned.

Heading up the stairs, ready to change my clothes, through the bedroom door, first I saw his leg.

Then his body, lying flat out on the floor.

Then my husband's face. Gray. Ashen. Gone.

Out in the distance, some woman was shrieking, the loudest scream I'd ever heard. And coming up behind me, on the carpeted stairs, I heard the footsteps of my four-year-old, her little voice asking, "Mommy, why are you screaming?"

I knew she was not to see him.

Spinning around, back down the stairs, running breakneck in high heels, half way

down, I scooped her up in my arms, still running – to the bottom of the steps, out the door, to the neighbors'.

That night, the neighbors took her in. I told myself I would tell her in the morning. But in the morning, we needed to fly back East for the funeral. I put it off, thinking I would tell her at the airport. But at the airport, I couldn't. Settling into our seats on the plane, she asked me, "Where's Daddy?" And the only words that came out of my mouth were, "Daddy's with himself." I'll tell her, when we land, I thought. But when we landed, I couldn't do it, either. In the car, on the way to his parents' house, I put it off again. Finally, passing a park near the house I knew would be packed with mourning family, we pulled over. Boys kicked a soccer ball nearby. Holding her under the biggest, greenest tree, I told her Daddy got broken. He's someplace now where he can't come back. Not ever. Once in passing I had heard Mr. Rogers say small children always think it's their fault if their parents divorce. This was broken family of a different shade of heartbreak, but I wanted her to know. Daddy was broken. He can't come back, and this was not her doing. She cried. The deed was done.

**Eileen Douglas  
New York City, NY**

## Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K

**Rachel Zients Schinderman  
Santa Monica, CA**



It started off as a vanity project. I wanted to get in shape. I figured if I ran a race for charity that would be a good motivator. Good for my body. Good for the world. I immediately wanted to do a marathon. But I knew that was too much to bite off at first. I knew I would quit. A 5K sounded good, reasonable. That I could achieve. I looked online and found a listing for all local 5Ks in Los Angeles and quickly one jumped out at me. The word "suicide" sat next to it, just resting calmly holding its place on the page.

I thought I simply could tighten up my thighs, improve my cardio, but seeing the word there on my screen piqued my interest. I clicked. That led me to click again, secretly on my laptop sitting on my couch. It was just between

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Saturday, August 5, 2006**

SAS Summer Potluck  
11:30 - 2:00 p.m.

*see page 7*

**Sunday, October 8, 2006**

Alive & Running for  
Suicide Prevention 5K/10K

*see below and page 5*

That night, as we lay in the dark, past midnight, not sleeping, she asked again, "Where's Daddy?" as if she'd never heard. Telling her once was not enough. I told her again.

So began our life together as just the two of us.

We moved to New York.

For months, I was fine. Shock shielded me. I read her the Raggedy Ann book, found a new job, put her into daycare.

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the screen and me. A perfect little trail. I clicked again. Then, I called.

My father hung himself when I was four. Back in 1975. Quite a while ago. But there I was with absolutely no preplanned thought in the matter calling regarding group therapy for my 30 year old loss.

I don't know why it seemed so miraculous to me to do such a thing. I am not ashamed. I do not keep quiet. Ask me how he died. I will tell you. I even wrote a whole book about it. As did my mother. *Rachel and The Upside Down Heart*, a children's book chronicling his death and my healing process. Though her book never mentioned suicide, his death and how he died were not topics I shied away from.

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## Tom's Column

The Survivors After Suicide program's entire source of funding is charitable giving by individual donors, philanthropic organizations and foundations to Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center. This means that we get no County funding, relying instead solely on donations. Didi

Tom Rankin, J.D., M.A.

Hirsch's only fundraiser for SAS and the Suicide Prevention Center is its annual *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K*. This year, it will be held on Sunday, October 8, at the same terrific location as prior years: Westchester Parkway, just north of LAX and west of Sepulveda Blvd.

Last year was the first year I tried my hand at fundraising for *Alive & Running*. Initially I was intimidated by the prospect of asking friends and family for money. What if they didn't care about suicide prevention? What if they couldn't afford to give?

The internet provided the perfect vehicle for me to simultaneously allay my fears and rally my troops. First, I found a picture of my mother (she killed herself when I was less than a year old) and scanned it into the computer. Next, I went to Kintera's website and uploaded the picture to my fledgling fundraising page. Finally, I wrote several brief paragraphs about my mom and the cause of suicide prevention.

*Voila!* Instant fundraising magnet. Using the website, I was able to easily e-mail all my friends and family with a link to the site. They could

donate money directly online via credit card or send checks to Didi Hirsch. There was an onscreen "thermometer" that measured how close I was to my fundraising goal.

My friends and family surprised me with their generosity. I remember vividly pondering whether to ask a particular friend for money because he didn't seem like the charitable sort. I decided to go for it and to my shock he donated \$200! You simply don't know what someone is willing to give until you ask.

I ended up raising almost \$2,500, the second-highest individual fundraising effort last year. I'm very proud of that, but of course to call it an "individual" effort is to miss the point completely. That fundraising worked so well precisely because it involved my friends and family asking their friends, acquaintances or neighbors.

What we noticed is that making the web page personal is key to success. Select a vibrant picture of your loved one. Include specific details about his or her story. Share your thoughts and feelings about preventing suicide. People will surprise you with their response.

You can check out this year's *Alive & Running* website at: [www.aliveandrunning2006.kintera.org](http://www.aliveandrunning2006.kintera.org).

~ Tom

Tom Rankin serves as the Coordinator of the Survivors After Suicide Program and as Suicide Prevention Educator. He can be reached at (310) 751-5370 or [trankin@didihirsch.org](mailto:trankin@didihirsch.org).

## Suicide Ceremony

Gretchen Kubacky  
Culver City, CA

I felt hollow  
Speaking to you  
As if my core had been removed  
All of my femininity  
Garnet pomegranate clustered  
center  
Golden light diffusing shadow  
The precious thing it was  
Taken away to be reshaped  
And not yet returned  
To the central cavity  
Of my vast empty body

Small irregular pearls growing  
Around the remnants of rock  
Left inside me  
Some irritant feeding me  
Pushing me  
Growing inside me  
New gems  
The poem that grew from my  
tears

Casting you out  
Returning you to the earth  
Leaving you behind  
That is how I love you

But there are tiny flat-faceted  
Indian diamonds  
Emerging from the dusk

~ Gretchen

*Gretchen Kubacky, a survivor who lost her father to suicide in 1979 and her brother to suicide in 1996, is a therapist-in-training and facilitates SAS groups in the West Los Angeles area. She wrote this poem on November 20, 2005 after the closing ceremony of the Survivors Healing Conference, during the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's annual event at the Faculty Center of U.C.L.A.*

## Lifekeepers Memory Quilt

Our quilts are displayed at national meetings, suicide-related conferences and other events. All 50 states have come together in this joint effort to educate the world about the need to reduce the incidence of suicide. You can share your pictures and sentiments by dedicating a square in the Lifekeepers Memory Quilt, offering the image of your loved one. A \$20 fee covers the cost of material, labor and postage necessary to create your visual tribute. You will receive a cotton square and instructions on how to proceed.

Yes, I want to create a quilt square to honor:

Send the material and instructions to me:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my \$20 check or money order made out to Mary Halligan to cover the cost of material, labor and postage.

Mail to:  
Mary Halligan, 21422 Grant Ave., Torrance, CA 90503  
or call Mary at (310) 316-4392 for information

# “The White Balloon” - Closure On My Terms

Sandy Jacobson  
Los Angeles, CA

No one in my family has ever died a lingering death. The year that my brother committed suicide was no exception. In August of that year, my stepmother of nineteen years died from cancer, within six weeks of diagnosis. In September, an aunt died suddenly of old age. In October, another aunt died suddenly of old age. In November, my grandmother, who had never been sick a day in her life, was hospitalized with pneumonia. My dad and I rushed to her side. She was dead the next day. In December, my nineteen year-old nephew was killed by a drunk driver. I no longer wanted to pick up the phone, for fear of hearing “who else” may have died...although I was hard-pressed to think of many who were left.

Four months later, I got the call that my favorite brother had committed suicide. I was incapable of processing any more deaths, especially his. He had been the kindest, gentlest soul I'd ever known, and for this reason, he was the last person I'd ever expected to take his own life.

There never was a memorial because my brother's two daughters were living at opposite ends of the coast, and didn't have the money to get here. I didn't have the money to fly them into town. I had expected that my oldest brother, who took care of everything else surrounding my brother's death, would organize the memorial, but he never did. There's never been an explanation.

That was seven years ago...and in the past year, a number of circumstances have finally allowed me some acceptance and closure around my brother's death. One of those steps was participating in the eight week “Survivors After Suicide” Support Group. For anyone struggling with the loss of a family member to suicide, I would strongly encourage him or her to attend one of these groups. I found it very beneficial. Our stories were all

different, yet we each shared pieces of each other's stories, and learned more about the fear and denial often associated with a suicide.

At our last meeting, in late Spring, the leader had brought in a white helium balloon for each of us, to write whatever we wanted to about our departed loved one...and we went outside to let them symbolically go. I watched my brother's balloon float east, until it disappeared out of sight...and mused to myself how it appeared to be traveling in the direction of a place that he'd loved, out in the desert.

A few weeks later, I had occasion to go to that place in the desert with a friend. In the middle of nowhere, a white helium balloon appeared in front of us on the highway, and seemed to be leading us in the direction of my brother's favorite place. I KNEW it couldn't be the same balloon...but I did find it strange that in the middle of nowhere, a helium balloon of the same color would simply “appear.”

That day, while attending a fundraising event for this place, I won the grand prize, which was a free return visit, with all the amenities. I've never won anything in my life, until that day. My next opportunity to return would be September.

This summer, my oldest brother moved to the east coast, and I realized that most likely, there never was going to be a memorial for my favorite brother—and I felt he deserved it, and I needed it for final closure. I realized that the memorial had to come from me, and be about my relationship with my brother...in a place that was special to both of us—his place in the desert. It sits on Indian holy ground, and the people who run the place have a table in one of the buildings where people leave religious icons, letters, photos, and trinkets of all kinds. THIS would be where I would do the memorial in writing, and leave it

there...in a place where he would love to be, and where I could “visit” when I wanted to.

I put together a written memorial of his life, in a report folder with a clear cover. I included family photos, photos of his favorite albums, and photos of special things he'd given me or made for me and wrote how/why each thing was special to me and how it had touched me. I also wrote him a “thank you” for all the things he'd given me while I was growing up...his time, his love, his patience with me, and some of my favorite memories with him.

When I arrived at the desert, I read the memorial one last time, and laid it on the table. I said a prayer, and went and had a “sound bath” on the property, with crystal bowls tuned to the body's chakras...and reflected/meditated on my brother as the sound bath began.

When it was over, I felt completely at peace...like I'd finally been able to say “good-bye” and release him...and “leave him” someplace he'd really want to be...where, if necessary, I could go back and “visit” him, in a place that's special to both of us.

This was not at all the “traditional” memorial I had envisioned for my brother, but it worked perfectly for me...and I felt it was something deep and meaningful between my brother and myself, on a very personal level. I had always envisioned a memorial service at the church we had been raised in.

The next day, I attended an event that was connected to my brother in another way. As I sat on the grass at the event with some friends...I noticed that one of the decorative balloons had broken loose, and was floating up into the sky, towards the desert...“coincidentally” another white balloon.

~ Sandy

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## Who's Ed?

Rick Mogil  
Studio City, CA

You've all come to know quite a bit about me in the past year and a half, possibly two years by the time this is published. Maybe too much. But what do you know about my brother Ed?

Edward Michael Mogil was born August 31, 1954 in a small hospital in North Hollywood, California. He was the third of four boys, a sickly child with respiratory problems, asthma, like me, and there were a few times when the doctor came to the house to give him or

both of us shots of adrenaline to open our airways (yes, doctors actually made house calls back then). At the age of 2, he spent some time in the hospital in an oxygen tent, as his asthma grew worse. But through it all, he was able to smile and laugh (not too hard as it would trigger another attack).

Our asthma was our bond. He, too, went through a summer unable to go swimming as he went through the scratch test for allergies. In those days it wasn't just a little pinprick with allergens placed under the skin. It was a round stylus with a sharpened, hollow tip of

about 1 to 2 mm diameter. Ed's back, like mine four years earlier, was stamped with a numbered grid, this stylus was spun in each grid box to cut the skin and a drop of an allergen was placed on the spot. The redness of the reaction determined the degree to which we were allergic to the source of the allergen.

Hey! That's how they did it back in the “old days.”

As Ed got older his allergies grew worse. To get Ed ready for school, we would have to take warm, wet face towels and clear the crust around his

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## Volunteer Highlight



You may have seen **Dick Stout** before. When he retired, he wanted to continue to stay active and give back to his community, which he does through volunteering. Not only has he volunteered for

Didi Hirsch, but he also dedicates his time to many other volunteer activities. He volunteers at the California Highway Patrol's call center, is a traveler's aide at LAX, and distributes books and magazines to patients at Brotman Hospital. Because he enjoys singing and playing musical instruments, he performs in several church choirs and community bands.

Dick Stout has consistently volunteered every Tuesday since March 2004, never missing a day and always showing up with a smile. He began volunteering at the Culver-Palms Clubhouse, assisting with activity groups for clients, sharing stories and helping them to

learn about music. He then became an Emergency Services volunteer, where he was involved with the SAS program.

His work has been behind the scenes, but crucial to the SAS program. No job was too small or too big for him; he took on every challenge enthusiastically, going above and beyond in the quality of his work. He has been instrumental in doing extensive community outreach for SAS. He conducted outreach to the San Gabriel Valley and the South Bay by calling therapists individually to inform them of the services we provide to survivors and gathered a list of people interested in finding out more. The response was outstanding. Many therapists called back to say what a wonderful message Dick left about our services. He has been invaluable in helping to promote our youth SAS groups, which we hope to begin in the fall. He also contacted community groups to arrange suicide prevention presentations for older adults.

Dick has been a tremendous asset to SAS and has contributed in more ways than can be mentioned. He knows how to connect with people and because of his volunteer work, many more people are now educated about suicide prevention and informed of our SAS groups. Thank you for all your hard work Dick!

### How To Volunteer

We always need people to share their energy and talents!

- Volunteers for SAS may co-facilitate support groups, offer telephone support counseling, help with filing, plan events, etc.! Call Tom Rankin at (310) 751-5370.

- Volunteering as a counselor for the Suicide Prevention Center's Crisis Line involves seven Saturdays of training and a minimum commitment of one year (one weekly four-hour shift). Call Dave Smith at (310) 751-5330.

## Who's Ed?

eyes so he could see. He had to have the insides of his eyelids cauterized to remove the source of the crustiness. We were both sensitive to sunlight, developing a tilt to the head and a squint of the eyes that is evident in all of the family pictures.

In junior high school, Ed and I had to be placed in special physical education classes (better known as the Spaz Class). We were not allowed to run, skip, climb, jump or otherwise exert ourselves for fear of a massive asthma attack. We were both taking Tedral, a wonderful combination of ephedrine and phenobarbital. Talk about your highs and lows!

Our self-esteem sucked big time. We were both shy and self-effacing. He became introverted, I was forced to join a youth group, and we both used humor to hide our feelings of inadequacy, and feelings that we didn't belong anywhere.

Ed began experimenting with drugs as a pre-teen. He was digging into our mother's purse and cabinets for some of hers. His alcoholism developed around this same time. After adult parties in our house, the kids would go and check the drinks left from the night before. I would take a sip, but Barry and Ed would down whatever was left in the glasses until they hit one that had been also used as an ashtray (yuuch!). When Ed was 10, he had taken a bottle of wine from the adult table during the Passover Seder and drank half. I had to walk him around the neighborhood to try and sober him up.

By the time Ed had moved into high school, he had found marijuana and built his own psychedelic pot house in our back yard. Mom thought it was wonderful that Ed had used his artistic talent to create such a colorful building.

Ed took a holiday after high school and hitchhiked across the country to West Virginia. Barry and friends of Ed's reported that he was at his happiest there. But then he returned to Los Angeles.

Maggie and I were called to his apartment by Ed's girlfriend who was terrified that he would follow through on his threat to commit suicide. We were able to talk him down but were not successful in getting him to accept treatment until the last episode. I promised him I would go if he either went to a doctor or checked into a psych facility. He chose the facility for a voluntary 72 hour hold. It was one of the most depressing places I have ever been in and after the first visit with Ed, I was tempted to help him in his quest to find a way out before the 72 hours were up.

Once released he seemed to be changed for the better but a phone call from him a few weeks later put an end to those hopes. He had gone camping with friends and in a drunken stupor, dove off a ledge into a shallow stream and broke his collarbone. After we brought him back home, I called my parents and told my father I couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't take care of Ed. I couldn't save him. My father came over and took Ed back to get him into a rehab program.

*continued from page 3*

As before, it looked like it was working, but Ed had become the ultimate actor in the tragedy of his life and convinced my folks that he would do just fine if he went to live with Barry. Yeah, right! Out of the frying pan, into a fifth of Scotch. Two alcoholics living together, that should work.

But, his drug and alcohol abuses aside, he actually did very well personally in Oregon. He got a job at a chicken hatchery, was promoted to hatchery manager and became a trainer of other managers. He did not understand how anyone could give him that kind of opportunity, as he still felt worthless and inadequate. He married, adopted his wife's two daughters and seemed to be living with his addictions.

He never talked about his depression except obliquely with vague references to medications given by his physician, but the signs were there that he needed much more than just a bottle of pills. There were his manic spending sprees and the resultant remorse and depression for having spent so much that led to his filing bankruptcy twice. He was on the verge of filing a third time when it all got too much for him and he went out in a blaze of glory, not by blowing through the last of his money but by blowing his brains out in a remote motel, one hundred miles from home.

Oh, Ed! You blind, lost, helpless, foolish, foolish man! You were loved! You were respected! You were desired, you were loved. You just couldn't see it.

~ Rick

## Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K

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But group therapy with other people who know about suicide too, that seemed quite bold, quite grown up. In your face.

I was placed in a group with other people who had had losses of over a year. It was explained to me that very recent losses might be too raw for me to be around. But these were raw too. Though I took great comfort in the fact that I am not alone in having a parent ripped from your childhood by their own actions and having that linger deep into your own adulthood. We are all products of our parents' actions. I was just growing a little tired of the burden of this one.

The group became very important to me and the 5K was just something off in the future that I forgot about. But soon enough the race was upon us. And being that it was the reason I got involved in SAS in the first place, I knew I would attack it with vigor.

I started with the gym and called friends with giddy excitement when I ran a whole mile without stopping. I had my mother send me my favorite photograph of me lying on my father's belly on the beach, seemingly with not a care in the world, just enjoying the day with his daughter. I uploaded that picture to ask all of my friends for sponsorship.

Sending out the email to ask for money, I paused. This would be it. Very public, no turning back. Why would I pause? Was I actually even just a little ashamed? Ashamed of his actions? Of my roots? But I am the girl who talks about it, shouts it, wants everyone to know. Going through group, I realized I needed to do more than talk. And I realized apprehension doesn't mean shame. I sent it to everyone I knew and became obsessed with being the number one fundraiser. When I was overtaken by a mere 35 dollars I became incensed. This was my cause and I wanted to raise the most money, help the most people. Be the best at this part of it.

It may seem petty and illogical to be annoyed by being displaced as the top fundraiser, but this was the thing I could do well. I knew I would not win the race, I probably wouldn't even be able to run it all. But I could raise money and lots of it and be proud in that accomplishment. I reminded myself to be proud with being second. I ended up being 4th.

But when I went to check in, I heard, "Oh, are you Rachel? I wanted to meet you. Thank you for raising so much money." As she

shook my hand hello and handed me my number for the race I couldn't have felt more proud. It was what I imagined famous being like. I may have even said something about being displaced, but she behaved as if she hadn't heard me and just kept on smiling.

My husband and father-in law joined me in the race. Early in the morning we headed out. We stretched our muscles, bought raffle tickets, admired the memorial quilt. There were all of these people. I was struck. Often, we are in the shadows of grief with lies or avoidance as to causes of death or bracing for extreme reactions to the truth. But there, we were out in force, proud of ourselves and the work being done.

We all took to the streets when it was time. The planes of LAX rattled as they came and went beside us. Young students skipped at play with great ease. I huffed but kept going, pounding the ground with each step as if knocking on Earth's door each time with my father's name strapped to my back. And I knew then that I had become his protector, the parent/child dynamic reversed, the executor of his memory.

I walked chunks. But as we approached the finish line, my husband became my drill sergeant, urging me to keep up my pace, knowing as I took the last corner there should be some spark to my step and making me push forward.

It is nice to be part of a community. This community here in L.A., far from where he died and lived, but where it is that I have made my home. I felt proud and overwhelmed to make such a public statement.

It has been more than 30 years. That is a long time. Sometimes I can feel his memory, his essence fading. I want to run towards it, back to him. Then, at times, I want to run away, strip myself of this defining layer he has left me with. But neither is why I run, or maybe they are the only reasons. But I like to think I run for me, for something to do, something for me to physically and tangibly wrap myself around. It hurts. I can feel it deep in my body. I can see it in my body. It is change I can affect. That seems to be the most powerful element for me. I can get from here to there. I run because I can.

~ Rachel

*Rachel is Editor of the SAS Newsletter and is Eileen Douglas' daughter (see "Pass the Shadow")*

## Contributions

5/1/06 - 6/30/06

*A million thanks for your generosity!*

### IN MEMORY OF

**Angela Leighton** from Carol and Craig Lacy, Ms. Mary Anne Mendel, Ms. Lily Tomlin, Mrs. Melicent Tondro, Ms. Jane Wagner, The Winnick Family Foundation

**Wen Harris**, Abbey and Zahi Faranesh

**Barry Joel Zuboff**, Mr. Josh Zuboff

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## Resources for Survivors and Suicide Prevention

### HELP LINES

**Suicide Prevention Center Crisis Line**  
Los Angeles and Orange Counties: (877) 7-CRISIS (727-4747)  
Everywhere: (310) 391-1253

**Trevor Helpline:** Suicide hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth  
(800) 850-8078

**Hopeline:** 24-7 national suicide hotline  
(800) SUICIDE (784-2433)

**Lifeline:** 24-7 national suicide hotline  
(800) 273-TALK (8255)

### RESOURCES

**American Association of Suicidology (AAS)**  
(202) 237-2280  
www.suicidology.org

**American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**  
(888) 333-2377  
www.afsp.org

**Before Their Time:** A musical resource to provide comfort to people after the death of someone close  
www.beforetheirtime.org

**Compassionate Friends:** For parents grieving the death of a child; chat room from 10 a.m. - 11 p.m.  
National: (630) 990-0010  
Los Angeles: (310) 368-6845  
www.compassionatefriends.org

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# Pass the Shadow

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Then it hit. Shock wears off. For months I did not eat or sleep. At night, I pounded the pillow with my fists and cried. I dropped to 85 pounds. My life as I knew it, or expected it to be, was over. Another life, one you did not choose, steals in, in its place. Jeff, his taking his life at 32, was all I thought about. Obsessively. The odd place you find yourself when the person you love is both murder victim and murderer. Someone who, despite all your efforts, chooses to go. Yet to the outside world I functioned. I worked. I raised my child.

The first prayer you have – and the first fear – is, please, let my child not be scarred by this. May she not turn out at 20 to be a basket case. What helps is it mattering that your child be okay. But, the truth is you are not only thinking how can I be the best parent here. You are thinking how can I get through this night, this day. Heartbroken. Facing double the work with half the help. When your child needs you most, you, the surviving parent, are at the worst place in your life.

Practically, you find yourself with new difficulties. Always making arrangements for childcare. Always asking for favors (and making sure you return them in the ways you are able). The days you are dog sick in bed and she needs a cookie she can't reach or wants dinner. Emotionally, you know her family life is not the one you had, the one you wanted or expected for her. Not the one you alone ever can give her.

Yet there is something to be said for the parent survivor. I don't know how I would have parented in a healthy mommy daddy twosome. I never had that chance. Before he died, my husband was kicking the dog and slitting his wrists. I had so focused on his crises. If Rachel had been more than 4 years old, I fear how that life would have shaped her. Now, at least, all the decisions were mine and mine alone...and I was free to care for her as my first concern. Of course, it helps to have a good kid to start with.

We didn't stop talking about him. I didn't hide what happened from her. As she grew older "Daddy got broken, his head didn't work" became "Daddy took his own life, he was troubled." I didn't pretend to be okay when I wasn't. We were always open, honest and real. Not everything has to go smoothly for a child to grow. They also grow from facing difficulties, seeing you face yours, and knowing they can face theirs. I learned I could do more than I thought. I hope, by example, I passed that along to her. She could see, too, it helped I had a dream, a passion for a job I yearned to do, and, freed to work for it, made it up the mountain. I hope I passed that along to her, too. New York is a magic city. When life comes back, it comes back with a rush and, starved from those years sitting on the sidelines, if life intrigues you, you again embrace it. That I know I gave her. The front row seat to learn about the bigger world. To discover her talents.

One day, when she was nine, driving on a country road on a summer day, a tree cast a shadow on our side of the sunny road up ahead. "Pass the shadow," Rachel dared me. And, with no other car in sight, I steered the car in a loop around the shadow then back into our lane. That, I thought, is a metaphor for what we've done. We've passed the shadow and we're back.

Time helps.

When I think of it, if I think of it now at all, I see the nightmare that was once painful agony has become a trace of a memory. The hurt did end.

Rachel is older now than Jeff was when he died. She is expecting a baby. Her first. My first. Packing up well-worn books from her childhood to bring her, I came across Raggedy Ann in the pile. I put it aside. Every book but that went into the suitcase. That one I will not pass along. We start fresh. New life is coming. We've passed the shadow and we've moved on.

~ Eileen

*Eileen Douglas is Rachel Zients Schinderman's mother and the author of Rachel and the Upside Down Heart, a children's book about grief written after the death of Eileen's husband Jeffrey (Rachel's father).*

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## Resources for Survivors and Suicide Prevention

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**Crisis, Grief, and Healing:** articles of interest and forum  
[www.webhealing.com](http://www.webhealing.com)

**Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center:** Nine sites throughout Los Angeles provide mental health care for those with severe mental illness and little money  
(310) 390-6612  
[www.didihirsch.org](http://www.didihirsch.org)

**Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center:** Click "Lost A Loved One?" at the top to go to the Survivors After Suicide program homepage; current and past issues of the SAS newsletter are available as pdf's through this site  
[www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org)

**Fierce Goodbye:** from a documentary focusing on survivors  
[www.fiercegoodbye.com](http://www.fiercegoodbye.com)

**Friends for Survival**  
[www.friendsforsurvival.org](http://www.friendsforsurvival.org)

**Grief Net:** Grief support; can connect you with various resources  
[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

**Heartbeat:** A peer support group offering empathy, encouragement and direction following the suicide of a loved one  
[www.heartbeaturvivorsaftersuicide.org](http://www.heartbeaturvivorsaftersuicide.org)

**International Association for Suicide Prevention**  
[www.med.uio.no/iasp](http://www.med.uio.no/iasp)

**International Friends and Families of Suicide**  
[www.friendsandfamiliesofsuicide.com](http://www.friendsandfamiliesofsuicide.com)

**Living With Loss Magazine**  
(888) 604-HOPE (4673)  
[www.bereavementmag.com](http://www.bereavementmag.com)

**Name a Star:** Name a star in remembrance of a loved one  
[www.nameastar.net](http://www.nameastar.net)

**National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI):** Provides support for family members of those with mental illness  
National: (800) 950-6264, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
California: (916) 567-0163, [www.namicalifornia.org](http://www.namicalifornia.org)

**National Mental Health Awareness Campaign:** A public service campaign to educate the public about mental health issues and eradicate the fear, shame and stigma commonly associated with mental illness  
(877) 495-0009  
[www.nostigma.org](http://www.nostigma.org)

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## Resources for Survivors and Suicide Prevention

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### **National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide (NOPCAS)**

(866) 899-5317  
www.nopcas.com

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

**Parents of Suicide Mailing List:** Submit your email to join the mailing list

www.groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/parentsof suicides

### **Parents of Suicide Support Site**

www.parentsof suicide.com

**Sibling Survivors:** Michelle Linn-Gust's website

www.siblingsurvivors.com

**Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education (SAVE):** Provides information on depression and suicide

(952) 946-7998  
www.save.org

**Suicide Discussion Board:** Open for the purpose of suicide awareness, support, and education

www.suicidediscussionboard.com

**Suicide Memorial Wall:** A tribute to lost loved ones

www.suicidememorialwall.com

### **Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network (SPAN)**

National: (202) 449-3600, www.spanusa.org

California: (760) 753-4565, www.span-california.org

### **Suicide Prevention Resource Center**

(877) GET-SPRC (438-7772)

www.sprc.org

www.sprc.org/thepark to receive the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's online newsletter

**Suicide Reference Library:** Provides helpful information to those who are involved in suicide awareness, grief support, and educational activities

www.suicidreferencelibrary.com

**Suicide Wall:** honoring Vietnam Veterans who have taken their own lives

www.suicidewall.com

**SurvivorsAfterSuicide Yahoo Group:** Created by a member of our survivor community, this group can be used to post photos and chat with other survivors

health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SurvivorsAfterSuicide/

**Survivors of Suicide:** a website dedicated to those who have lost a loved one to suicide

www.survivorsof suicide.com

### **Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Project, Light for Life**

**International:** Teen suicide prevention

(303) 429-3530

www.yellowribbon.org

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**AUGUST 5, 2006, 11:30 A.M.- 2:00 P.M.**

### **SAS Summer Potluck**

Join the community of survivors for a Saturday potluck luncheon at Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center, 4760 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City 90230. This summer's theme will be "Healing Through Writing." Survivors are each invited to speak for five minutes about how writing helped them to heal, whether via a particular project or the writing process in general. We would also like to put together a selection of survivor-written poetry or prose to hand out at the potluck. Please contact Tom Rankin at [trankin@didihirsch.org](mailto:trankin@didihirsch.org) or (310) 751-5370 if you are interested in speaking or contributing your writing.

**SEPTEMBER 7-9, 2006, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

### **SPAN USA's National Awareness Event**

Visit our nation's capital to join the Suicide Prevention Action Network (SPAN USA) in three days of suicide prevention advocacy, education and remembrance. The event is entitled, "Suicide Prevention: Right Here, Right Now." See [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org) for details and registration.

**OCTOBER 8, 2006, 8:00 A.M.- 12 NOON**

### **Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K**

More than 3,000 participants from all over Los Angeles will join together on Sunday morning at Westchester Parkway (just north of LAX) to raise awareness and funding for suicide prevention services. Adults and children alike will enjoy our health and fitness expo and finish line festivities. Proceeds from *Alive & Running* will directly benefit Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center's Crisis Line and the Survivors After Suicide program. See [www.aliveandrunning2006.kintera.org](http://www.aliveandrunning2006.kintera.org).

**OCTOBER 25-27, 2006, TORONTO, CANADA**

### **Complexity of Suicide: Prevention, Intervention and Aftermath**

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention's (CASP) 2006 International Conference will take place at the University of Toronto's Conference Center. Keynote speakers will include Dr. Beautrais (Principal Investigator, Canterbury Suicide Project in New Zealand), Dr. Links (President of CASP), Dr. McIntyre (Head, Mood Psychopharmacology Unit at Toronto Western Hospital) and Dr. Rudd (President, American Association of Suicidology). There are also Survivors' Events and Programs in which survivors can learn about suicide prevention and bereavement support.

See <http://www.suicideconference2006.ca> for details.

**NOVEMBER 18, 2006, NATIONWIDE BROADCAST**

### **National Survivors of Suicide Day (AFSP)**

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention links local conference sites throughout the U.S. by satellite and live web broadcast at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org). This day of healing was created by U.S. Senate resolution after Senator Harry Reid of Nevada lost his father to suicide.

### **FIND EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

**See these websites for details:**

[www.mentalhealth.org/calendar/suicide.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.org/calendar/suicide.asp)

[www.sprc.org/calendar/index.asp](http://www.sprc.org/calendar/index.asp)

[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

## **SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE NEWSLETTER**

A quarterly publication of Survivors After Suicide (providing support groups for those who have lost a loved one to suicide), a program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center.

SAS Program Number: (310) 751-5370

Crisis Line Number: (877) 7-CRISIS (Toll-free in LA and Orange Counties), or (310) 391-1253 anywhere.

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### **REPRINT POLICY**

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Also include the issue date and year the article appeared. Kindly send a copy of any reprints for our authors to Editor Rachel Zients Schinderman at her e-mail address above.

Thank you.

**View this newsletter online at [www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org).  
Click on "Lost a Loved One?" then "Newsletters" for pdf files**



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