Survivors After Suicide (SAS) helps people resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way, and helps them move forward in their lives, positively and productively.

Today, it is with great love and respect, that we honor Dr. Norman Farberow, a founding father in Suicidology, a pioneer in the field. Many of us are here today because his work has either influenced our careers, saved our lives or helped us cope with losing a loved one to suicide. For some, we are here for all those reasons.

Dr. Farberow is a prolific, brilliant man, yet he is the most humble man you will ever meet. In fact, when he was being interviewed for this tribute and was asked to describe his most enduring contribution to the field of suicide, he graciously declined to answer, not wanting the spotlight to be on himself. But today he is in the spotlight so I am going to highlight what I know to be most important to him – the impact of his contributions on people’s lives.

In 1958, Dr. Farberow co-founded the first Crisis Line in the nation. It began operating from the homes of our founder fathers – who include Dr. [Edwin S.] Shneidman and Dr. [Robert E. Litman] – with their wives answering the phones. After the national recognition they received from conducting a psychological autopsy on Marilyn Monroe, they were flooded with calls and had to increase to 24/7 coverage. Today, there are hundreds of crisis centers saving lives across the nation and even worldwide. At times, we get feedback from our callers to the Suicide Prevention Center. One particular caller said, “Please thank whoever made this crisis line possible; it saved my life tonight.” So on behalf of that caller and millions more, thank you Dr. Farberow.

Dr. Farberow is an enthusiastic educator. In 1965, he started training law enforcement officers, understanding that first responders were often in situations where they were dealing with suicidal individuals and they could be the difference between life and death. A few years ago, there was an Orange County Sheriff who was called to the scene of a man

Always With Me
By Rossano Galante

On a rainy night in December 2010 I returned home from a Christmas concert to discover my partner, Douglas, sleeping peacefully in his reclining chair with his faithful Irish setter, Kiley, lying next to him. The CD player filled the dimly-lit house with joyful Christmas music. I was surprised Doug didn’t wake up when I entered so I went to check on him. As I approached, I saw his pale face and noticed his chest was not rising to take in the cool evening air. I realized he wasn’t sleeping and my stomach and chest tightened as the blood left my face and my mouth and throat became dry. I frantically tried to revive him until the paramedics arrived. To my horror, they were unable to bring him back.

That night was the beginning of my two-year journey through grieving hell that included trauma, guilt, anxiety, fear, loneliness and loss of hope. During those grieving years, I had a handful of dreams about Doug in which he never spoke to me. Whenever I awoke from those dreams, I was filled with intense

Continued on page 6
The theme at this year’s American Association of Suicidology 47th Annual Conference was **Never Alone: Survivors Helping Survivors**.

Survivors of suicide attempt have been years in the past. and healing embraces for new survivors or those whose loss may have been years in the past.

Whenever moments of darkness descend or the pain and grief seem overwhelming, reach out to members of your group, your facilitator or co-facilitator or attend the drop-in group in your area.

Each of us has the capacity to be a support for other survivors. We’ve been there. We know the pain and have felt the despair. We’ve needed a shoulder to cry on, someone to wrap their arms around us, someone to not tell us “it will be OK,” but rather to say, “I am here. Let me help.”

Be aware. Be helpful. Provide hope.

Peace and Love,

Rick Mogil has been program director of Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention and Outreach Services since 2007.

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**Resources for Survivors and Suicide Prevention**

**HELP LINES**

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
Suicide Prevention Crisis Line
Los Angeles and Orange Counties: (877) 7-CRISIS or (877) 727-4747
Chat available 4:30 pm-12:30 am daily at www.didihirsch.org/chat
Text services also available
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK or (800) 273-8255
TEEN LINE: Teen hotline staffed by teens 6-10 pm (800) TLC-TEEN or (900) 852-8316
Trevor Helpline: Suicide hotline for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth (800) 850-8078

**RESOURCES**

American Association of Suicidology (AAS) (202) 237-2200 www.suicidology.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) (888) 333-2200 • www.afsp.org
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services: Eleven sites in LA and Orange Counties
(310) 390-8896 • www.didihirsch.org
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) (1-800) 950-6264 www.nami.org
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) www.samhsa.gov
Suicide Prevention Resource Center (877) GET-SPRC (438-7772) www.sprc.org or www.sprc.org/thespark

**NEWSLETTER**

Survivors After Suicide Newsletter is a publication of Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention Center. Survivors After Suicide provides support to those who have lost loved ones to suicide.

SAS Program Numbers:
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OC: (714) 547-0885

Editor: Kim Kowby
Editorial Board: Lois Bloom, Samuel C. Bloom; Norman Farberow, Ph.D., Rick Mogil, Richard Stohr, MFT
Reprint Policy: Nonprofit support organizations may reprint material from our newsletter.

More resources at www.didihirsch.org

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**Upcoming Events**

**Alive & Running**
5K Run/Walk for Suicide Prevention
Saturday, December 6, 2014, 6 –8pm
Veterans Memorial Park – Teen Center
4117 Overland Ave.
Culver City, CA 90232

**Suicide Attempters Find Help, Hope and Support at Didi Hirsch**

By Robert K. Stohr, M.S., L.M.F.T.

Each year, there are more than 5,000 suicide attempts in Los Angeles. According to at least one study, almost half of the people who survive a suicide attempt go on to make a second fatal or non-fatal attempt in the next five years. As the Division Director for Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center and a fellow survivor of a suicide loss, I want to assure you that we are dedicated to providing help and hope to those in pain and in danger of dying.

Nearly three years ago, we formed Survivors of Suicide Attempts, a program that provides support to people who have attempted suicide. Since our first group met, we have helped dozens of people find new strategies to cope with painful and persistent thoughts of suicide. Our program has been so successful that our treatment manual is under review by the National Suicide Prevention Resource Registry to become a “best practice” nationwide. We were also pleased when the American Association of Suicidology announced at its 47th annual conference in April that their board of directors has created a new division to represent suicide attempters and the people who love and care for them.

Meanwhile, our crisis line, which is the oldest and largest in the nation, will set a new record of taking more than 58,000 calls this year. We continue to serve an area of over 21 million people, and have currently expanded our chat services to 8 hours a day. Our crisis counselors use text services to communicate with deaf persons and others who are unable or unwilling to reach out to us by computer or phone. We are also one of five centers in the nation taking calls on the Disaster Distress Helpline for people coping with natural or manmade disasters.

We couldn’t do what we do without the help of our wonderful staff and phenomenal volunteers, who work as crisis counselors, provide support to fellow survivors and assist us with outreach efforts. Too many of us have lost our loved ones to suicide. In my own experience, I have found healing by bringing my pain into action to make a difference. I hope this newsletter brings you light and hope and that each of you continues to find solace and healing among our community of survivors. I also invite you to join us at our annual Alive & Running 5K Walk/Run fundraiser for the Suicide Prevention Center.

Robert is Division Director of Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention Center.

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**Haiku**

By Michael Mitchell

Waves will roar and spray,
And the clouds will float away,
But my mom will stay.
Summer Potluck for SAS Members Celebrates Hope

Just Walk With Me
By James R. Kok

I want to tell you about it…

No, really I don't. I'd rather keep it to myself; handle it alone. I do think it would be good for me to share it with you, but I don't want to because I'm afraid of what you'll say or how you'll act.

I'm afraid you might feel sorry for me in a way that makes me feel pathetic — like I'm some "poor thing." I'm afraid you will try to cheer me up — that you will give me words or text or prayers that tell me in a subtle way to stop feeling bad. If you do that I'll feel worse (but hide it behind my obedient cheerful smile). I'll feel you don't understand. I'll feel you are making light of my problem (as if it can be brushed away with some brief words of cheer).

I'm afraid you'll give me an answer. That this problem I've been wrestling with for some time now (and about which I have thought endless thoughts) will be belittled. That you might answer in a half-minute what I've struggled with for weeks. I'm also afraid you might ignore my problem, talk quickly about other things — tell me of your own.

I'm afraid, too, you might see me stronger than I am, not needing you to listen and care. (It's true, I can get along, but I shouldn't).

What I'd really like is if you would "just walk with me." Listen as I begin in some blundering, clumsy way to break through my fearfulness of being exposed as weak. Hold my hand and pull me gently as I falter and begin to draw back. Say a word, make a motion, or a sound that says, "I'm with you." If you've been where I am, tell me how you felt in a way that I can know you're trying to walk with me — not change me.

But I'm afraid you'll think I'm too weak to deserve respect and responsibility; you'll explain what's happening to me with labels and interpretations; or, you'll ask me, "What 'ya going to do about it?"

PLEASE, just walk with me. All those other things seem so much brighter and sharper, smarter, and expert. But what really takes love is to "just walk with me."

This excerpted essay, read at the potluck by survivor Marilyn Nobori, appears on the Care & Kindness Ministries' website at www.careandkindness.org.

IN HONOR OF

SAS is a network of survivors that offers words of hope, shoulders of support and healing embraces for all Survivors of Suicide, whether their loss was recent or years in the past. SAS holds a summer and a holiday potluck each year.
Dr. Norman Farberow,..., continued from page 1

standing on the ledge of a building, ready to jump and end his life. The Sheriff was able to talk this man off the ledge and save his life, crediting the training he had received from the Suicide Prevention Center. Dr. Farberow knew back then that training people on how to help someone at risk saves lives. As a psychologist and clinician, Dr. Farberow knew that although helping individuals with suicidal thoughts or behaviors could prevent suicide it did not cover everyone at risk. He realized that survivors—people who have lost a loved one to suicide—were also at risk. So in 1981, he started a Spanish Survivor After Suicide (SAS) group, only to find that people were unwilling to participate. They often stated they were “not interested in therapy.” We realized this was going to be harder than we thought. After much consultation, discussion, and brainstorming, we adjusted our goals and renamed our group to “Workshop: Losing a Loved One to Suicide.” We hope the newly named workshop will reach people who may not be interested in therapy but may still benefit from the safety and comfort of a group focused on suicidal loss. The funny thing about stigma is that it makes us afraid of the things we don’t know. When we offered to educate people on the topic, they started to respond. We had planned on having one educational workshop where we provided psychoeducation on suicide and a personal story shared by one of our survivors from Los Angeles. The first meeting drew 10 participants and the results were incredible. Once they realized there was a safe space to discuss their loss and heartaches, everyone started to open up and share. Our survivor co-facilitator said she was impressed in two ways by the workshop. “First, everyone came and was committed. Hubands came with their wives and the husbands participated and shared from the heart. Second, everyone was so genuine, humble, and loving. There were tears of sorrow and the bond that was made was incredible. For me, it was a fabulous success.”

The group ran late because people were so connected with one another and wanted to know more. Each participant voiced a request for more Spanish workshops. That is when we knew that we had reduced the stigma of mental health and suicide for this group of participants. To meet requests for more groups, we have added three more Spanish workshops, which all resulted in high attendance and most important, healing.

We feel so honored that this group of Spanish-speaking participants allowed us into their pain and healing journey. We are also so proud of them for being brave enough to face stigma. We feel the experience has been a true reflection of Didi Hirsch’s mission statement to transform “lives by providing quality mental health and substance abuse services in communities where stigma or poverty limit access” and hope that we can continue to serve other groups throughout Orange County.

Sandra Yi, MFT is a Bilingual Therapist I for Didi Hirsch’s Survivor Support Services in Orange County. Didi Hirsch provides survivor support services, education and outreach in Orange County in partnership with Access California Services, Korean Community Services and Vietnamese Community of Orange County with funding from the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services, Prevention and Intervention Division, Mental Health Services Act /Prop. 63.

Always With Me, continued from page 1

sadness and despair. After a few years the dreams nearly stopped and now I am doing much better. I believe the grieving process is almost complete, although I miss him every day.

Doug and I fought was a beautiful, kind, loving, generous and gentle man who had suffered from severe depression since childhood. He tried to help himself with therapy, medication and even electroshock therapy but nothing seemed to alleviate his pain. In my opinion, Doug didn’t really kill himself; depression killed him. Now when I dream of Doug, he is alive.

In a recent dream, he smiled and said hello as we embraced. It felt so good to hug him. When I awoke from my dream, I did not feel depressed. I felt elated, joyful and happy to know Doug is still with me and always will be.
SAS Group Meetings

Everyone who has completed an eight-week Survivors After Suicide Support Group is invited to attend scheduled monthly meetings at any of the locations listed below. There is no charge.

**Drop-In Groups**

**San Gabriel Valley**
- Meets the 4th Wednesday of each month, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**Santa Ana**
- Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
- Meeting dates: Aug 6, Sept 3, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3.

**San Fernando Valley**
- Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**South Bay**
- Meets the 2nd Sunday of each month, 11:00 am – 12:30 p.m.

**West Los Angeles**
- Meets every Tuesday night, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Eight-Week Groups**

Our eight-week support groups for those who have lost loved ones to suicide take place on the following schedule:

- Group 1: Late February
- Group 2: Late May
- Group 3: Mid August
- Group 4: Mid October

Groups meet once a week for an hour and a half for eight consecutive weeks, with locations in Sherman Oaks, Culver City, Redondo Beach, San Marino and Santa Ana.

To be placed into a group, please call: Los Angeles: (310) 895-2326; Orange County: (714) 547-0885