

# Survivors After Suicide

Your Path Toward Healing

A Program of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

May 2010

## ALIVE AND RUNNING



It was a brisk Sunday morning – too early for most people in Los Angeles to be awake. Yet there they were. The volunteers arrived at 4 a.m. to start setting up. The runners, walkers, children, students, parents, grandparents, friends, and supporters started showing up at 6:30. They all had one thing in common. They awoke early on September 27 to participate in the Alive and Running 5K Walk/Run for Suicide Prevention. Over 1,100 people turned out to run, walk, support loved ones, volunteer, share stories, cry, laugh, heal, and most importantly to raise awareness for suicide prevention.

*continued on page 4*

## Once Upon a Time...

By Carol Marie Garcia



Once upon a time the world was sweeter than we knew.

"Everything was ours, how happy we were then. But somehow once upon a time never comes again."

Lyrics: "Once Upon A Time"  
from *All American Musical* 1962

Once upon a time I was a precious little girl and the world was perfect. I had a sweet older brother made of love and dreams. And I loved him. Together we constructed a world of joy while playing army men on the old lumpy quilt perfectly shaped for the hills and valleys for hiding from each other. He taught me to play catch and to throw like a boy. I loved his toys, no dolls for me. I loved his hand-me-down

clothes, striped and plaid shirts, no flowerprint blouses. We were the best of friends. And life was most certainly wonderful. Then some few years into our bliss the oddest thing happened, we were the other people, the people to whom tragedy happens.

Suddenly, one perfectly beautiful day, our father died. Our mother experienced such great grief that she forgot to see that not only her husband had died but her children's father had died too. She became dead mother walking. My brother and I were left alone together. He became frightened and weak and sickly. I became courageous and brave and protective. We looked out for each other. We loved each other.

Once upon a time, life was lived happily ever before. Happily ever before life lost its perfection. Then time moved forward and life became more and more unclear. Innocence was lost, experience was gained and anxiety overtook my sweet brother's love and dreams. I watched as he pulled away and moved forward into his own life. And to me it all became dreamlike. In slow motion with no sound to the words,

*continued on page 9*

## CSULB Honors Kyle Kubachka at Alive and Running 2009

If you attended this year's Alive and Running 5K walk/run for suicide prevention, chances are you saw someone wearing a shirt in memory of Kyle Kubachka. This is not surprising, given there were 191 walkers/runners participating in the race in his memory. Kyle Kubachka died by suicide in November, 2008 at the age of 19. He left behind lots of friends and family members who were devastated by his suicide.

Following Kyle's death, his mom April Kubachka, searched the internet for support in dealing with her grief. That is how she learned of the Survivors After Suicide (SAS) program at Didi Hirsch. The 8-week SAS group she attended has been an instrumental part of her healing process after the loss of her son. April stated, "Attending a support group with others that have lost someone to suicide was very helpful since I kept asking myself what I could have done to prevent Kyle's death?" April's group was co-facilitated by Stan Lelewer, Chair of the Didi Hirsch Board of Directors, who also lost a son to suicide.

*continued on page 8*

**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.**



## Once Upon a Time....

Of all the opening lines I could have used like "In the beginning..." (maybe a little too preachy) or "A long time ago, in a Suicide Prevention Center, far, far away..." (maybe a little too spacey. Well, maybe

not for me), I felt the fairy tale beginning to be the most appropriate.

The suicide of our loved ones put an end to our fairy tale future with them.

For some it was the evil Troll, Depression, that turned their hand against themselves. For others it might have been the nasty Abuse twins, Lady Alcohol and/or Prince Substance, who make it easier for our loved one to give in to their impulses and impair their judgment.

Their death has altered our lives and the choices we make, dramatically.

It has been said they ended their suffering and pain and made it ours.

For many of us it has changed our path and purpose in life.

We certainly do not get the beautiful fairy tale ending we envisioned for ourselves.

More like a Greek tragedy.

It has also brought us into a new family. Survivors After Suicide, a place of support, safety and understanding.

And how did all of this begin, you might ask?

We were honored, at this Winter's potluck on December 5th, to have the founders of the Suicide Prevention Center and Survivors After Suicide program who spoke about the beginnings of our organization and what they had hoped to accomplish.

Survivors were given the opportunity to share with us and the founders what SAS and SPC has meant to them, how it has helped in the healing process

Thank you, everyone, for your support.

Peace and love,

*Rick*

Rick Mogil

## 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

#### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

(800) 273-TALK or (800) 273-8255

#### **TEEN LINE:**

Suicide hotline for teens staffed by trained teens 6-10 p.m.  
(800) TLC-TEEN

#### **Trevor Helpline:**

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

### RESOURCES

For full resource list go to [www.didihirsch.org](http://www.didihirsch.org)

#### **American Association of Suicology (AAS)**

(202) 237-2280

#### **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)**

(888) 333-2280

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

#### **Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services:**

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) – For survivors, click "Suicide Prevention Center" then click on the Survivors After Suicide program page for the link to all Didi Hirsch publications; current and past issues of the SAS newsletter are available as pdf's through this site. There is also additional information about SAS.

#### **Suicide Prevention Resource Center**

(877) GET-SPRC (438-7772)

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org) or [www.sprc.org/thespark](http://www.sprc.org/thespark) to receive the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's online newsletter.



## I Never Thanked the Firemen

By Mary Halligan

Dear Firemen,

It was over eight years ago that my husband, Lanny McCommon, took his life in our garage just a few blocks away from your station, and your team responded to the call. After suffering from severe, clinical depression for 4 years, Lanny gave up hope of ever being normal again. On April 23rd, 2001, he laid out a piece of rug on the floor of the garage, laid down on it, put the gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. I had talked to him about 45 minutes before and realized that something was wrong. I could tell by the tone of his voice and our conversation. He had been telling me that when you get this sick, you don't ever get better. He said, "Lanny's not here anymore...he's gone". I tried to reassure him and told him I was leaving work immediately and would be home shortly. When I got home, he didn't come out the back door to greet me as he normally did. His van was parked on the street, so I knew he had to be home. When I went into the house, I couldn't find him. My worst fear was materializing. I ran back outside to get my garage door opener. As I opened it, there he was laying on the carpet in a pool of blood with the gun next to his hand. I can't convey the shock and horror that I felt at that moment. The finality of what he had done hit me like a brick wall. I immediately realized that there was no undoing what he had done. His life and mine were over. I started screaming and crying and ran back into the house to call 911. The operator told me to go back into the garage and feel for a pulse to see if he was still breathing. He wasn't. There was no bullet hole, which meant that he must have put the gun in his mouth. Oh my god! She then told me to walk down the driveway, to the front of the house away from the garage and wait for the police.

The rest was a blur. I remember several cop cars and fire trucks pulling up in the street and my neighbors standing in their front yards. I remember neighbors trying to console me, relatives arriving...I lost any semblance of time. I couldn't believe what Lanny did in one brief moment. He had ended his life and changed mine forever. I remember saying that I had hid the gun, but hadn't checked it in awhile. I should have put it in a new hiding

place. Why didn't I check on it? How could I not have checked on it. A detective reassured me that Lanny would have gotten another one anyway, because he had made his decision. Then I remember a line of firemen, six or seven, I don't remember how many. Each one came up to me, shook my hand and told me how sorry they were. I will never, ever forget that moment. After the coroner had left with Lanny's body, the police and firemen and everyone else had left except my brother and sister-in-law, I went back outside into the garage. The carpet was gone. All traces of blood were gone. I looked in the trash can for the carpet. It wasn't there. I learned the next day from my neighbor that the firemen had cleaned everything in the garage and obviously had taken the carpet with them. They did this so that I wouldn't have to; so that I wouldn't have to look at that pool of blood again. I looked throughout the garage for a note. I looked in the garden, because Lanny had talked about our garden that day on the phone. No note anywhere. The only things that were left, Lanny's watch and glasses that had tiny speckles of blood, were on the counter top in the kitchen, where the firemen, police or someone had placed them...

I never thanked the firemen for what they did for me. I'd like to do that now somehow. Although a simple thank you seems woefully inadequate, I don't want to wait any longer to do at least that. I realize that some of these firemen are at different locations, but maybe there is some way to contact them, I'm not sure. Anyway, I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their incredible acts of kindness. I will never, ever forget them. After going through an 8-week survivor support group, for people who have lost someone to suicide, at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center, I was determined to educate myself about Lanny's suicide. I've learned about the chemical changes that take place in the brain with different kinds of mental illnesses, including severe, clinical depression, which was the case with Lanny. I learned how genetics can be a risk factor. I knew that Lanny's dad had been an alcoholic, but I didn't find out until years later that his father had attempted suicide once or twice. I learned that one of Lanny's sisters had been taking anti-depressants most of her adult life. There are other risk factors that have to do with coping skills. After Lanny had lost his job, we had about a 2 ½ year time frame, when we started losing loved ones. First, we lost Lanny's mom to lymphoma cancer. Then we lost his best friend to cancer. Next, one of his sister's died of cardio-pulmonary disease. Two months later his youngest sister was murdered.

Then we lost my mom, after taking care of her after 2 debilitating strokes, heart attacks and pneumonia. Lanny and I were both beaten down. Lanny said that he could have coped with all this, if he had been working. He felt that he wasn't pulling his weight, that he as a burden to me. He got more and more depressed. Because of the stigma, he didn't want anyone to know just how depressed he was. After 2 years, he finally agreed to get help. We both saw a psychologist and several psychiatrists and got on medications. Lanny tried and tried a long list of different meds that either eventually didn't work or had terrible side effects. I personally think that if we hadn't waited 2 years before we got help, the meds would have been more effective. The longer you wait to treat a disease, whether it's your brain, your heart or any other organ, the more difficult it will be to treat. As a last resort, we investigated Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT). After checking into Cedar Sinai's psychiatric ward, Lanny said he couldn't go through with the treatment. His worst nightmare was being locked up in a psychiatric ward and never getting out. "Except", he said, "this isn't a nightmare...it's really happening." I know now that Lanny gave up hope at that point. He didn't think that there was any medication or anything that could help him. That was the end of January 2001. Three months later he ended the psychic pain and hopelessness that he lived with 24/7...he ended his life.

The only thing that made any sense to me was to help others in crisis, the way I had been helped. So for the last 6 years, I've been volunteering at the Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center in Culver City, by co-facilitating support groups and doing phone counseling for people who have lost loved ones to suicide and are waiting to get into a support group. I more recently was trained to be a Suicide Response Team (SRT) member, who works with Mayor Villarigosa's Crisis Response Team (CRT). However, we only go to police calls involving suicides. Because we've had the same experience of losing someone to suicide, we try to help the survivors any way we can and leave brochures about counseling and support groups at Didi Hirsch. I have to give back; if not me, then who?

Again my heartfelt thanks to all of you and especially to those who helped me deal with that horrific day, April 23rd, 2001, the day of Lanny's suicide.

Sincerely,

**Mary Halligan**





*Alive and Running, continued from page 1*

In addition to raising awareness, Alive and Running raised much needed funds to support Didi Hirsch's suicide prevention programs. Overall, nearly 1000 walker and runners raised over \$135,000. This year, there were fifteen teams that each raised over \$1,000, and a total of 53 teams raised \$85,500! Funds will be used to support the 24-hour crisis line, survivor programs, and suicide prevention outreach in our community.

Every year, the tragedy of suicide creates some 6,000 new survivors in Los Angeles County alone: parents, siblings, spouses, children, and others who have had someone close to them die by suicide. For many, this was a special day to honor and remember those lost to suicide. Many runners had t-shirts emblazoned with pictures of loved ones and there were memorial quilts and banners with pictures and names of those who died by suicide. Survivors shared personal stories to let other survivors know that they are not alone and many individuals who, when accepting their medals, said they were running to erase the stigma of suicide.

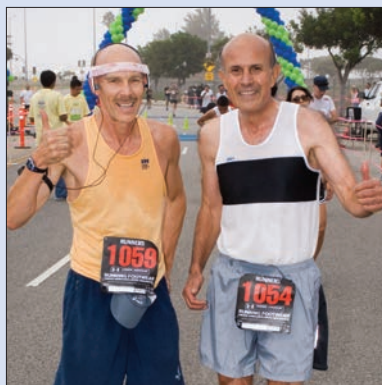
Apart from the race, there were other activities as well. This year as in years past, participants and spectators were able to enjoy the rhythmic sounds of the Japanese Chikara Daiko Drum Group. This ancient tradition, known as both taiko and daiko, goes back many centuries. Large drums were used to scare the enemy on battlefields and were incorporated into court music and religious rites. As a special treat, participants and spectators were able to view a SWAT vehicle and a FBI Mobile Command Center – one of only three in the country.





Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services thanks the following sponsors for their support: Beacon Capital Partners; Fletcher Family Foundation; Miles Electric Vehicles; Quadriga Art; Todd Rubin; Joel Edstrom and Margaret Adams; the Van Konyenburger Family; those who memorialized Sallye Clair; Boone, Bridges, Mueller, O'Keefe & Nichols; CSULB Project Ocean; Kita S. Curry, Ph.D. and Peter Curry; Linda and Martin Frank; Carlos L. Garcia in honor of Sixto B. Garcia; Mimi and Carlos Garcia; Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. Geller; those who memorialized Daniel Lichstein; Jolie and Jon Jashni; Vera M. Jashni; Stan and Mary Lelewer; Janine and Henry Lichstein; Means Knaus Partners; Ogilvy & Mather; Mary and Jeffrey Sherman; those who memorialized Warren Douglas Kolodny; Howard M. Loeb; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wierwille; the Bruckner Family; Friday Morning Book Club; Greulich Family Trust; Julianne Grossman; the Woodrow Family; and Cheri Renfroe Yousem.

A very special thank you goes to our wonderful volunteers and runners, especially race committee chairs Janine Lichstein and Todd Rubin and the race committee, who helped make this year's event such a great success.



## SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE

### IN MEMORY OF

Fritz Smars from Julien James Bozung  
Claire Garritano from Frank De Simone  
Edward W. Ford, Jr. from Angela Ford  
Roger D. Creighton from Louise A. Pilati  
Scott Lindsey from Fredda Ellis  
Laura Roanne Cole from Barbara and Melvin Cole  
Robert Tynda from Robert Montgomery  
Aiko Nobori from Erika Rothenberg

### IN HONOR OF

John and Kelly Jolley, Jim Jolley and Julie Jalelian  
from Kelli and Rick Delaney

### ALIVE AND RUNNING 2009

### IN MEMORY OF

Sallye Clair from John Clair  
Jacqi LeBlanc from Martha Barber  
Daniel Lichstein from Richard and Jennifer Geller  
Kyle Kubachka from Deanna Price  
Marty Jaconi from Vera Jashni, Ed.D.  
Warren Douglas Kolodny from Cynthia Kolodny  
Jeff and Chris Pikul from Deborah Pikul Zent  
Jacqi LeBlanc from Rebekah Child  
Deanna Knott from Christy Vargas  
Wei-ping Wang from Ellen Ji  
Wei-ping Wang from Chuanshu Ji  
Wei-ping Wang from Kevin Ji  
Gary (Lefty) Leth from Annalisa Krol  
Kyle Kubachka from April, Keith, Ryan, Brent and Kevin Kubachka  
Moon Lady Aginna from Sandra Cheng  
Camelia Holder from Vanessa Holder  
Geoffrey Grahn from Bryon Hutchens  
Douglas Roman Segura from Tamar Igoyan  
Aiko Nobori from Linda and Dean Nobori  
Robert Sumser from Augela Sumser  
Kenneth Williams from Debbie Williams  
Warren Kolodny from Samuel P. Ross

We take a  
moment to list  
those names  
that are in our  
memories and  
those whom we  
wish to honor in  
a remembrance.



Johnny Lynch from Stanley Boganey  
 Alfred Conrad from Jacob F. Conrad  
 Peter Jones, Dr. Joe Noel, Dr. Andrea Oberstone, Danelle Cox,  
 Bobby Bagby, Jimmy Bagby, Robert Curry  
 from Kita Curry, Ph.D. and Peter Curry  
 Stephen Lelewer from Mary and Stanley D. Lelewer  
 Scott Anderson from Bill and Linda Straky  
 Paul Woodrow from Laurie Woodrow  
 Paul Woodrow from Nina Woodrow  
 Paul Woodrow from Randi Woodrow  
 Geoffrey Grahm from Barbara Grahm  
 Mary Kay Bergman from Carolyn Eddy Anders  
 Dana Siegel from Noreen and Alan Baum  
 John Carpenter from Cynthia and Thomas Bryan  
 Kyle Kubachka from Duy Thu Phan  
 John Berreyes from Ingrid Scott Berreyes  
 Lanny McCommon from Mary Halligan  
 Marc Henry Millstein from Eric Millstein, M.D.  
 Sasha Simpson from Kelly Wedbush  
 Dellion Dezube Hufford from Elaine Yim  
 Jordan M. Farkas from Pamela and Jordan Farkas, M.D.  
 Janie Gage Phear from Nancy Phear  
 Sasha Simpson from Tina Brady  
 Nor Goloman from Lynn Goldman Silbert  
 Christopher Ziesmer from Mary Kate Denny Ziesmer  
 Michael A. Moffitt from Karla Lysdal-Moffitt  
 Sonja Johnson from Robert Johnson  
 Jonathan Furie from Kim Kowsky  
 Randall Christian from Darryl Christian  
 Ben Dravis from Mary Dravis-Parrish  
 Janie Phear from Kate Jackson  
 Daniel Lichstein from Janet Jacobs  
 Donald Bishop and Richard Sebel from Barbara Bishop  
 Taylor Brutzman from Cindy and Denis Karpeles  
 Laura Roanne Cole from Barbara and Melvin Cole  
 Kyle from Jason Pringle  
 Dell from Ryan Provencher  
 Kyle from Sasha Rastegari  
 Stephen Dennis from Nora Dennis  
 Michele Amelia Smith from Pamela Rayburn  
 Johnny Lynch from Marie Lynch  
 Johnny Lynch from Lynda Drysdale  
 Bill Shadrick from Nancy Shadrick

Jacqi LeBlanc from Cindy Mantor  
 Keenan J. Esparza from Linda Melendez  
 Diego Fernando Tapias from Juan Carlos Tapias  
 Mike from Catalina Rodriguez  
 Paul Sharples from Madeline and Robert Sharples  
 Andrew William Rodin from Patricia Brienzo  
 Benny Barberis from Sandra Siedenbourg  
 Ken Stranger from Jill Stranger  
 Kyle Kubachka from Annmarie Verano  
 Michelle Wakamoto from Randall Wakamoto  
 Stephen Lelewer from Audrey and Charles Warren  
 Matt Werber from Katharine Werber  
 Garland Williams from Jeanne Williams  
 Ben Dravis from Jason Dravis  
 Daniel Lichstein from Janine and Henry Lichstein  
 Kevin A. Jackson from Anthony Jackson  
 Dan Cope from Andy Mackenzie  
 Dan J. Cope from Patricia and Will Mackenzie  
 Loved ones of Didi Hirsch Board Members and Staff, lost to suicide  
 from John P. McGann, Sr.  
 Holly Reed from Angela and Brian Miller  
 Aiko Nobori from Steve Uyemura  
 Joe Rosa from Claudia Rosa-Bienenfeld  
 Brian Franklin Rose from Dale K. Rose  
 Noel Parrish from Emilia G. Parrish  
 Sasha from Lisa Schaub  
 Adam Siegel from Cecil Willard

## IN HONOR OF

Debbie Plkul Zent from Corina Molte  
 Charlotte and Jeremy Fletcher from Mary and Jeff Sherman, M.D.  
 Stephen Lelewer from Donald Mellman, M.D.  
 James Darrell Braden from Suzie Edwards  
 Charity Jones from Jay Jones  
 Lanny from William Taylor III  
 Ben Dravis and Tom Brockish from Timothy Brockish  
 Dell from Chase Polan  
 Sophy Kann from Becky De Marie  
 Jim and Mikki Loveman from James Loveman  
 Rebekah Child from Heather Child  
 Justin Boyle from George Thierjung



CSULB Honors Kyle Kubachka, continued from page 1

April said, "Seeing Stan, who had also lost his son, was an inspiration that I might be ok one day."

April was so grateful for the support that she received from SAS that she wanted to help others who have been touched by suicide. She decided to form a team for Alive and Running. She recruited over 50 family members and friends for her team, but she didn't stop there. She also decided to approach some of her professors at the School of Nursing at California State University in Long Beach (CSULB) to

enlist their help in encouraging students to join her team. Her professors were very supportive and some even offered class credit to students who got involved. The result was a team of 191 people, \$5,810 raised, and an award for the largest team at Alive and Running 2009!

April was pleased with the success of her team, but states that she experienced many conflicting emotions on the day of the race. She was proud of all of the people who had come out to support her family and she was happy to be able to help the Survivors After Suicide program. But at the same time, she didn't want to be there. The reason she was there was because she had lost Kyle and she just wanted her son back. "It was an award I never wanted to win," April said fighting back tears. Everyone at Didi Hirsch is forever grateful to April and countless other survivors who, even amidst their loss and grief, find the courage help others whose lives are touched by suicide. It's not surprising that the staff at CSULB were supportive of April's efforts. In September 2008, California State University Long Beach received a Garrett Lee Smith grant for Suicide Prevention efforts on campus. This grant led to the formation of Project OCEAN (On-Campus Emergency Assistance Network). The goal of Project OCEAN is to prevent suicide by promoting a campus climate that reduces the stigma of mental health issues and encourages help seeking behaviors when needed.

Throughout the year, a wonderful relationship has emerged between the Suicide Prevention Center and Project Ocean. In May, 2009 Shari Sinwelski, Director of Program Development at SPC, joined the Project Ocean Advisory Board. In July, Carolyn O'Keefe, Program Coordinator for Project Ocean, attended the ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) workshop sponsored by SPC. Project Ocean reciprocated by allowing Shari to attend their QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training for Trainers in September. In addition, Project Ocean made a generous \$1,000 donation to SPC as a Bronze Medal sponsor for Alive and Running!

We wish to thank Project Ocean, April Kubachka, and The Nursing Program at CSULB, for their support of SPC and SAS and for promoting a campus environment that supports open discussion of mental health issues.

## Sweet Relief

By April Kubachka

*Note: I tried to write this poem from my son Kyle's perspective from a compilation of notes I found of his, including his suicide note. He was only 19 years old when he used a gun to end his life all alone in a hotel room.*

*Kyle Kubachka RIP 11/22/08*

Cold steel in my hand  
Sweet relief inside the chamber  
Do I have the courage to send myself  
to Heaven?  
As I lie here alone and wonder

Can I survive this world?  
Am I going crazy?  
Should I pursue girls?  
Have I have lost all ambition or am I  
just being lazy?

I wish that I could share  
This burden that lies within  
I long for a place that's warm without a care  
A place where I can fit in

I feel like tears would pour out of my eyes  
If I tried to explain  
So don't even think of blaming yourself  
Because that time never came

I am loved and will be missed  
I know this to be true  
But I just can't stop myself  
What am I to do?

Life is very strange and difficult  
But on the other side it's easy  
I want release from the unrelenting pain  
I feel  
This has to be done ASAP

So my loved ones  
The clock strikes three  
It's time for me to soar  
I hope you can all go on happy without me

### The SAS Program surrounds us with

**Shelter**, a place of refuge from stigma and ignorance;

**Understanding**, from those who have walked this path;

**Caring**, love and concern from fellow travelers;

**Foundation**, a basis of knowledge, acceptance, finding equilibrium, and ways to pay it forward;

**And Hope**, that there is life beyond this tragedy.

**Remember, the SAS Monthly Drop-In Groups provide continued community**





## It is time to say goodbye....

It has been two years since I stepped into the SAS Newsletter editor position. Then the hope was that the newsletter would be an opportunity to "share your experience and share in other's experiences" and to help you stay connected to this special survivor community. I feel honored to have been part of this goal and thank Lyn Morris, Rick Mogil, Joanne Uy and Monty Lawton and the many survivors who shared their stories. My journey has been enriched by this experience.

I am not going far as I'll stay involved in the SAS groups, Alive & Running and venture into crisis line and outreach. It has been pleasure to serve as editor.

Thank you.

**Marilyn**

Marilyn Nobori.

### *Once Upon a Time, continued from page 1*

I saw my brother become an angry lost soul. I had no power over his destiny. He missed his father so very much and I was the only one listening. But I was just his little sister and no matter how protective I was I could not replace our father. I wanted to.

Once upon a time, decisions were made that set a life in motion. Unattended sorrow caused so much pain that my brother required numbing. Comfortably numb, my brother withdrew into a history of grief. His dreams of success and greatness were overtaken by destructive emotions and thoughts of death. Death, he imagined would release him from his overwhelming pain. I was there. I took the gun away. Seeing me reminded him of his love. And for a short while his psychache went into remission.

Once upon a time, and far away an echo resounded, an almost unheard, "I Love You." Narrowing his vision and seeing only his pain, my brother forgot to listen. "I am here, I love you. I am your little sister. I have never left you. Please see me, hear me, know me. Wayne, Wayne, Wayne. I love you Wayne."

There is no Wayne.

He hanged himself, the ultimate suffocation. Life had been squeezing the breath out of him for decades. He tied the knot and took the drop and wriggled waiting for his last breath. There were no goodbyes. No, I love you too.

Once upon a time, and a long time ago I knew life was perfect. Now, forever after, the question remains: Life is never perfect, or is it?

## 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 Rick Mogil at (310) 895-2326.
- 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) 895-2325.

## SurvivorsAfterSuicide 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 Mental Health Services.

SAS Program Number: (310) 895-2326

Crisis Line Number: (877) 7-CRISIS (Toll-free in LA and Orange Counties).

Editor: Marilyn Nobori | SASNews@sbcglobal.net

Editorial Board: Lois Bloom; Samuel C. Bloom; Norman Farberow, Ph.D.; Rick Mogil; Lyn Morris, LMFT

Designer: Monty Lawton

Special thanks to Didi Hirsch's Development Department.

### Reprint Policy

You are welcome to reprint material from our newsletter if you are a nonprofit support organization that produces periodicals. We do require the item to include the author's name and title and the following:

*Reprinted with permission from the Survivors After Suicide newsletter, a publication of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services: Suicide Prevention Center, 4760 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230.*

Also include the issue date and year the article appeared. Kindly send a copy of any reprints for our authors to Editor Marilyn Nobori 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



4760 South Sepulveda Boulevard  
Culver City, California 90230

Mailing list changes cannot be made unless corrected or  
duplicated labels are mailed to SAS at the address above

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Los Angeles, CA  
Permit # 509

## 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.

### Monthly Drop-In Groups

**San Gabriel Valley:** San Marino United Church of Christ, 2560 Huntington Dr., San Marino. Meetings are held in the Choir Room the last Wednesday of each month from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Meeting dates: Jun 30, Jul 28, Aug 25, Sep 29.

**San Fernando Valley:** Sherman Oaks Hospital, 4929 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Meeting are in the Doctor's Dinning Room on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Meeting dates: Jun 12, Jul 10, Aug 14, Sep 11.

**South Bay:** To be announced.

**West LA: Didi Hirsch Culver-Palms Center:** 11133 Washington Blvd., Culver City. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Meeting dates: Jun 16, Jul 21, Aug 18, Sep 15.

### Eight-Week Groups

For 2010, our eight-week support groups for those who have lost loved ones to suicide will take place on the following schedule:

**Group 2:** Late June    **Group 3:** Mid-August    **Group 4:** Late 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 Gabriel and Montrose. To be placed into a group, please call Rick Mogil at (310) 895-2326