



# SURVIVORS

**after suicide**

A Program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2003 • VOLUME 16, NO. 3 • PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

## Another Anniversary of 9/11

David Davis  
Los Angeles, CA

On September 5, 1986, my parents woke to discover that my older sister Margot had killed herself. They had planned to institutionalize her that morning, a last-ditch effort to treat her years-long eating disorder. Instead, she retreated to the back room of their Upper West Side apartment, put a gun she had obtained God-knows-where to her lips, and pulled the trigger. She was 25 years old; she would have turned 26 exactly one week later.

I wasn't surprised that Margot decided to end her life, but her death devastated me. I was 23 and had just moved to Los Angeles. Except for a cadre of college buddies, I didn't know a soul. That fall and winter, numb with grief, I sleep-walked through a dreary proofreading job and smoked way too much dope. I clung to one joy: taking my dog to the beach for hours-long walks after midnight.

Almost by accident, I began to intern at an alternative newspaper. While searching for story ideas to pitch an editor, I stumbled upon a support group for people who'd lost loved ones to suicide, run by the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center. I signed up, figuring my participation would give the article some color.

For eight weeks, in the company of a licensed therapist, I met with a half-dozen strangers. Suicide was our bond, though we had suffered different losses and found ourselves

at various stages of grief. One middle-aged woman had discovered her husband hanging in their garage; she cursed him for leaving her with three kids and mountainous debt. Other participants had seen their children complete suicide. They tip-toed in and out of the meetings, the stigma all but tattooed across their faces.

The meetings didn't provide "closure," that unattainable goal that suicide's abrupt ending mocks. We remained, by turns, angry, confused, sad, guilty, depressed. But by talking with others who'd experienced the same searing pain, by realizing that others have endured this (and worse), our shattered lives didn't seem so freak-ish. We could continue even

*continued on page 2*

### SAVE THE DATES

## SAS Annual Summer BBQ Potluck

SATURDAY, JULY 26TH, 11:30-2:00 P.M.

*All are invited! Bring the family.  
Didi Hirsch, 4760 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City*

## Alive & Running 5K/10K Walk/Run

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2003

*Didi Hirsch's annual race to benefit the  
Suicide Prevention Center.  
Alive & Running Hotline: 310-751-5373*

## First Born

Catherine Montgomery  
Redondo Beach, CA

Ken was born on a hot September day in 1951, in a Long Beach, California "maturity hospital." For those of us who have raised children, it's popular to say, "I was doing the best I could at the time."

Because his life ended so tragically though, I can't help but look for reasons that involve me. I know in reality, I was not, am not, as all powerful as my desire to take the blame would indicate. In my heart I want to give us both grace. We both had

the best intentions.

He was cute. Not magazine cute, and not just cute 'cause he was ours. He had a sweet little face and he was a loving, good-natured little boy. When he was a little over two, his baby brother was born and he quickly and easily assumed the classic, older, protective, responsible first-born personality. Ken was bright and curious and creative. He got excellent grades in school, made friends easily and aspired to be a

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**SAS exists to help people resolve their grief and pain in their own personal way,  
and to help them move forward in their lives, positively and productively.**

## The SAS Coordinator's Column



Carole Chasin, M.A., M.F.T.

On March 8th we held another successful training for volunteer Co-facilitators and Telephone Support Counselors. We had a great turnout of survivors interested in learning additional means for providing support to new survivors. My personal "Thanks" to all who attended as trainees and trainers.

As a reminder, I want to let all SAS volunteers and therapist leaders know that you are also members of the Advisory Committee. Every couple of months we meet in

Culver City to discuss various aspects of the SAS program. Your participation is vital to maintaining and enhancing our program and I invite you to attend the meetings. You will receive notices in advance of each meeting via email or regular mail.

**VOLUNTEERS** are needed to help the Suicide Prevention Center and/or Survivors After Suicide program, approximately three hours per week at the Didi Hirsch Culver City location. Please call Jessica at (310) 751-5373 to offer your services.

See you at the **SAS Summer BBQ Potluck, Saturday, July 26th, 11:30-2:00 p.m.** at Didi Hirsch.

Carole ♡

## Another Anniversary *continued from page 1*

as we learned to embrace a label of self-identification. We are known, to ourselves and within the mental-health community, as "survivors."

Soon I volunteered to lead (or, in the vernacular, facilitate) these groups. I know too much about depression and suicide after a decade of this work, but I don't dare stop. The program—and others like it around the world—works. We help people to re-assemble their lives. We help them to learn how to breath again.

One topic that invariably comes up during these sessions is anniversaries. Survivors want to know how to deal with the approaching birthday of a loved one, or a wedding date, or a family holiday like Thanksgiving. The anniversary of the suicide is especially traumatic.

Some 15 years have passed since my sister completed suicide; no longer do I think about her daily. But I still come unglued during the first two weeks of September. As I remember the pain Margot endured before she decided to end her own pain, I mourn her permanent absence and the fact that we won't grow old together. Sadness seeps through my being. I cry a lot.

Only anticipation gets me through. Knowing that the anniversary looms—and knowing that I'll feel normal again once it passes—enables me to deal with the week. I use the time to re-set my soul: I vow to live on for her.

Two years ago, on the day before what would have been my sister's 41st birthday, my private anguish was interrupted. Like every other American, I watched television in horror on September 11, 2001, as terrorists attacked New York and Washington, D.C. In the days that followed, I watched the nation rock with grief. The emotions cascaded in step-time: shock, denial, guilt, and anger. Lots of anger. Sadly,

these reactions are all-too-familiar: I was observing millions of newly-bereaved survivors.

We now approach September 11, 2003—the second anniversary of the incomprehensible assault. I take no pleasure in noting that, again this year, the entire country will experience what I have for the past 16 years. The days leading up to 9/11/03, and the day itself, will be consumed with agitated sorrow. Those who lost relatives or friends will experience overwhelming sadness. They will be angry, they will feel depressed, they will mourn.

And I know this: they will survive. Yes, their lives have been changed irrevocably by forces beyond their control. And yes, they will mourn this loss for the rest of their lives. But they will learn how to incorporate this tragedy into their souls. They will find ways to use the anniversary date to honor their loved ones' memories. They will breath again.

Earlier last year, I wrote a feature-story about the Long Beach Polytechnic High School track team for a local glossy magazine. The school is a sports powerhouse whose graduates become Olympians and professionals. On a beautiful spring day in southern California, as seagulls swooped overhead, I interviewed a soft-spoken sprinter whose extraordinarily smooth running motion is wondrous to behold.

My first question was the usual: when was she born?  
"September 5th, 1986," she replied.

I almost dropped the cassette recorder. Thankfully, I was wearing dark sunglasses and managed to maintain my composure. When I re-played the tape on the ride home, I heard her again say, "September 5th, 1986." I could tell that she was smiling when she said it. And why not? On the worst day of my life, on the very day my sister killed herself, this remarkable athlete had entered the world. ♡

*Reprinted from Surviving Suicide, Vol. 14, No. 3, Fall 2002*

## First Born *continued from page 1*

surfer. When he was about seven, he fell from the top of the swing set in the backyard. It seemed so bad at the time. Now, how I wish that was the worst thing that ever happened to him.

In those days, it was a *felony* to have seeds in your pocket. Not joints, not a certain amount, no intent to sell, just seeds. It was a tough time to be a kid. The first time he was arrested, at 17, for being “incorrigible” (cutting school and possessing marijuana), he was sent to a county juvenile camp for six months. He took being away from home hard. He said that every morning, he’d wake up and have to face the fact again that he was there.

I know the feeling. I wake up every morning and face again and again the fact that he’s gone. Forever. And after many years, I’m beginning to get the concept of “forever.”

I saw a woman on television recently talking about the death of her son. She said something that wiped me out. She said, with such honesty and innocence and pain, “I didn’t know he’d be dead this long.” Who could possibly comprehend how long you can endure such pain, how much you’ll yearn to see them. How you won’t...ever. A few weeks after Kenny died, my daughter Kathy was going to bed one night and out of the blue, she angrily demanded, “I want Kenny back!” I could relate. I wanted him back too. I wish I could have pulled that one off for her.

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*She said, with such honesty and innocence and pain, “I didn’t know he’d be dead this long.” Who could possibly comprehend how long you can endure such pain...*

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Ken careened from crises to crises. He tried to commit suicide twice. We raced to the hospital to have his stomach pumped. The next day, he had a king-size hangover, his throat hurt and he was real angry that he didn’t make it. I was alone, scared and didn’t know how to help him. Unfortunately, the beat went on and his problems with “the system” finally overwhelmed him.

On August 16, 1970, Ken stopped by—he was living with a buddy but came by the house frequently. We talked for a while. I recall telling him that his brother (then 16) had slammed the front door that morning and had broken a couple of panes of glass. He seemed pretty tired and disgusted with us all.

*continued on page 5*

## The Gift

*A gift, I’m told, you’ve left behind,  
That I must seek and find;  
But pain too deep, and missing you  
Have blocked my open mind.*

—Iris Bolton, from “The Suicide of My Son,” ©1977

*The idea of any gifts arising from our loved one’s suicide may have seemed inconceivable at first, but with time, they are revealed. Later in Iris’s poem, we discover that the music her son composed became her gift. Jonathan Aurthur’s son, Charley, completed suicide almost seven years ago when he leapt from a freeway overpass in Santa Monica. Jonathan shares his gift:*

If my son Charley had not committed suicide I never would have read his journals, so in that sense they were a gift to me that resulted from his death. It was (to say the least) not an unadulterated joy, this gift, since his personal writings reflect a life of suffering and loneliness along with (shorter and dwindling) periods of pleasure and connection. Every rose is nestled among thorns; more than a few of them lacerated me as I reached in to pluck a flower.

One of my favorite passages from the journals occurs early in his illness (Charley is nineteen), nine months after his first suicide attempt, as he muses about his future. His desire for greatness and artistic success, even immortality, has led him to want to be a concert pianist. He explains why: “All the composers have left behind traces of themselves, and are therefore immortal since they are still played. Recognizing their love of humankind as I play their music I am exercising my sense of the commonality of man.”

This passage is a particular treasure to me because it shows a side of Charley that was not always visible. Often preoccupied with his internal torments, he could show little interest in other individuals, much less in “humankind.” But this passage gives the lie to the idea that Charley was basically selfish or shallow. And it gives me a sense that in helping to shape him, despite all my own mistakes, I must have done something right. ♡

*Last year, Jonathan Aurthur published a compelling account of Charley’s life and death in The Angel and the Dragon: A Father’s Search for Answers to His Son’s Mental Illness and Suicide, HCI Books, 2002, \$12.95; available at bookstores, on Amazon, and from Jonathan’s website, [www.theangelandthedragon.com](http://www.theangelandthedragon.com).*

*If you’d like to submit a story for The Gift, please write the editor at [sasnews@earthlink.net](mailto:sasnews@earthlink.net).*

## Overeating and Grief

“Overeating is a common reaction to the death of a person close to us,” says Howard Starr, Ph.D., an expert on bereavement and chair of the psychology department at Austin College in Sherman, Texas. “We feel lonely and helpless, and so we’re drawn to something that feels satisfying, that gives us pleasure and fills a void.” The difficulty is that overeating—like other common responses to loss such as drug and alcohol abuse or sexual promiscuity—quickly becomes a problem in its own right. “You’ve already taken the first step, which is recognizing that your eating is a substitute for love and affection,” Starr observes. “The next thing you need to do is recognize that you are hurting yourself with this habit and that it is within your power to stop.”

Admittedly, this won’t be easy. You’ll have to develop new, healthy coping mechanisms to replace the harmful one you’ve adopted. Perhaps the best way to begin is to seek out one-on-one counseling or to join a support group for those in mourning (call your local mental health association for more information). “Many grieving people don’t want to reflect deeply on their pain—they just want to stop hurting,” Starr notes. “But the only way to feel better, ultimately, is to confront your feelings and to come to terms with what you’ve lost.” Along with grief counseling, journaling about your feelings may also soothe you, so you no longer feel compelled to overeat. ♡

Reprinted from *SHAPE*, March 2003

### Shop Online and Benefit the Suicide Prevention Center— At No Extra Cost to You

Simply buy the things you’re already buying. Go to the SPC website ([www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org)) and click on “shopping.”

Up to 15% of your purchase benefits the SPC.

OfficeMax.com • OfficeDepot.com • French Toast® • SmarterKids.com™ • Tutorials.com • iBaby.com • Birthday Express • GameStop.com • Discovery Store • DisneyStore.com • Amazon.com® • Barnes & Noble • Sony Music Direct • Netflix • Hickory Farm® • Omaha Steaks • WholeFoods.com • BedandBath.com • Cooking.com • Linens-N-Things • DogToys.com • PETsMART.com • Avon • Shades.com • Sephora • Tom’s of Maine • Brookstone • Gaiam.com • Goodguys.com • Overstock.com • Buy.com • Sharperimage.com • jcrew.com • Fashionmall.com • JCPenney • L.L. Bean • Old Navy • REI • 1-800-Flowers™ • Giftpaks.com • Gifts for Animal Lovers • CBS SportsLine • International Golf Outlet • A&E/The History Channel

And more...

[www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org)  
click on SHOPPING

## suicidewall.com



From the novel by Alexander Paul

The concept of a second Vietnam memorial, an actual white marble wall in Washington, D.C. comes from the the novel, *Suicide Wall*, by Alexander Paul. This additional memorial wall would list the names of the Vietnam Veterans who have taken their lives since the war.

Currently the website, [www.suicidewall.com](http://www.suicidewall.com), serves as the electronic equivalent of the proposed Suicide Wall. Its purpose is to promote awareness of this issue and to encourage healing. It provides a system for the online registration of the names of Vietnam Veterans who killed themselves after the war, to determine how many there were, to memorialize their loss, and to resolve that the United States of America will never again risk the lives of its soldiers in a war unless it is willing to prosecute that war with full resolve (See United States Resolution).

Estimates vary on the number of Vietnam Veterans who have committed suicide. According to some, over 150,000 Vietnam Veterans have ended their lives prematurely, either through suicide, drugs, alcohol or a self-destructive lifestyle brought on by the Vietnam experience. This is almost three times the number killed in the war, and when combined with the war dead, approaches the 292,000 dead in World War II.

The namesake from which the proposed wall is derived, Paul’s book, *Suicide Wall*, takes a modern day look at the scars left by suicide. The story centers around two pre- and post-war friends: one who went to Vietnam and one who didn’t. The story takes place during a weekend trip to Reno. For the veteran, it is a desperate attempt to win money for a far fetched idea of building a memorial wall to commemorate those who have died by their own hand after the war. For his friend, the trip starts as a getaway from a life of less-than-honest living. How these two reach a modern day resolution of their wounds from vastly different experiences in the 60s is the basis of this poignant and sometimes humorous book.

Sales of the book will go to the support of the Suicide Wall memorial. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Fallen Warriors Foundation, a charitable non-profit organization dedicated to healing the wounds of war, and to Point Man, a non-profit Christian Ministry dedicated to helping Vietnam Veterans through their difficult lives and to prevent suicides. ♡

Order Alexander Paul’s novel, *Suicide Wall*, via email: [alexpaul@suicidewall.com](mailto:alexpaul@suicidewall.com), or online through Amazon.com.

Reprinted from [www.suicidewall.com](http://www.suicidewall.com), May 2003

## First Born *continued from page 3*

I was wide awake that night when he came in the house at about 2 a.m. He came into the family room, threw a sleeping bag over a chair and went straight to the phone. I heard him talking off and on for the next hour or so. I expected him to come in and talk to me but eventually I fell asleep.

I woke to the sound of my name uttered by a man standing in my bedroom door. It was the man Ken had been talking to on the phone (a close friend/father figure). Ken was unconscious on the floor. The phone was off the hook. A minute or two after I walked into the living room the EMTs arrived.

It was one month before his 19th birthday. I was angry with Kenny for “doing it again.” They took him in an ambulance to the hospital and told us to meet them there, without a word of explanation. No one told me he was already gone.

At the hospital emergency room, a cop came out and told me in an imperious tone to sit down, while he remained standing. I started to sit down but, still angry, bolted to my feet and demanded “What!” He told me my son was dead. No more, no less. I sat down.

I don’t remember much about the rest of the night.

I didn’t handle the rest of that week any better. Ken had just been to a funeral the weekend before. He came home and said, “It was so cool, Mom. All the freaks were there.” I wasn’t up to handling “all the freaks,” even if that would have been what he wanted. I had a small graveside service for him with a few friends and family.

What I do know for sure is: I miss Kenny. I miss him terribly, every day. I wish he’d been able to get through those tough times. I wish he was here today. I wish, with all my heart, I could see him and talk to him. What I don’t know is whether he would have continued to suffer, whether he made the right choice for Kenny after all.

And if I knew the answer to that one, it wouldn’t change anything. So here I am, all these years later, trying to believe it was all for a reason. What was true, and remains true, is he’s gone. And we, his brother, sister and I, remain.

I dreaded the 19th anniversary of his death. I had the irrational notion that it would somehow negate his life. That he would have been gone as long as he was here, and his life would sort of cancel out. I lived in a house on a river in Oregon then, and that evening I pulled a chair up to the edge of the bank and decided what I most wanted to do was just sit and watch the river.

The river was pretty wide but I could see the other side. There was a small beach a little way down and while I couldn’t see their faces, I could see two boys over there. I guessed their ages to be about 10. As I sat there weeping, I looked over and one of them waved at me.

I guess it doesn’t seem like much but it was the kind of sweet thing Kenny would have done at that age—wave at a lady across the river. I waved back and totally lost it. Was it...him?

I just thank that little guy. He could never know what that wave meant to me. It’s one of the dearest moments of my life. Whoever he is, I love him, and I hope, I pray, he’s a happy young man.

If you are wondering why I would want to tell Ken’s sad story, it’s because I want to talk about him. I want you all to know who he was and how much we loved him. Suicide, for the most part, is a kind of secret sin. I suppose I felt that way too in the beginning. I believed I should be ashamed to admit that anyone I knew, let alone my child, had committed suicide. How could I ever be ashamed of my sweet kid, Kenny? Well meaning (I guess) people told me his soul would never be at rest. You’re right, that didn’t comfort me much.

Now, all these years later, I’ve written a book, “Each Life Deserves To Be Remembered.” It’s not about Ken, it’s about anyone and everyone, every life that was ever lived. I know Kenny will be remembered. And, I believe his soul *is* at rest—the rest he deserved and didn’t find here. He was only in our lives a short time but he’ll be remembered by us until the day we die—and now that I’ve told his story here, maybe beyond. Yeah, I believe, beyond—that I’ll see him again—that he’ll be there to greet me. I can’t bear not to. ♡

*Thank you, Catherine, for sharing Kenny’s story. And thank you for all you do to keep our loved one’s memories alive through the Lifekeepers Quilts.*

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**W**hen another person loves us, it affirms for us our worthiness. It makes us feel special. Being loved is being accepted, approved, cherished, and esteemed.

*As a consequence, when our loved one dies, some of that self-approval drops away. Depending on our lives and the number of people whom we love and who love us, the impact of that change may be small, or it may be devastating. We may feel as if we are no longer important to anyone and that no one really needs or wants us. But, when we seek the support of others and nourish the bonds we have with them, we can gradually fill the void in our lives that was made by the death of our loved ones. ♡*

*Reprinted from [A Time to Grieve](#) by Carol Staudacher*



**Ken Willet  
1951-1970**

# Calendar of Upcoming Events

## JUNE 3-4, 2003

### AFSP's Youth Suicide Prevention Workshop

At the Penn Club in New York City. See [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) or call 1.888.333.2377.

## JUNE 28-JULY 1ST, 2003

### NAMI Convention

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Partnerships for Recovery: Confronting the Mental Health Crisis in Our Communities. Minneapolis, MN. See [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

## JULY 4-6, 2003

### The Compassionate Friends' National Conference

Atlanta, GA. See [www.compassionate-friends.org](http://www.compassionate-friends.org)

## JULY 19-22, 2003

### SPAN USA's 8th Annual National Suicide Prevention Awareness Event

Washington, DC. See [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)

## SATURDAY, JULY 26, 2003

### SAS Annual Summer BBQ Potluck 11:30 - 2 p.m.

All are invited, including the family, to Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center in Culver City. Mailing to follow.

## SEPTEMBER 10-14, 2003

### International Association for Suicide Prevention's 22nd World Congress

Stockholm, Sweden. See [www.med.uio.no/iasp](http://www.med.uio.no/iasp)

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2003

### Alive & Running 5K/10K Walk/Run

Didi Hirsch's annual race to benefit the Suicide Prevention Center.

## SEPTEMBER 21-27, 2003

### International Yellow Ribbon Suicide Awareness and Prevention Week

Westminster, CO. See [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2003

### 5th Annual National Survivors of Suicide Day

Preparations have begun for this year's National Survivors of Suicide Day. See [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org), or call 1.888.333.2377.

## APRIL 14-17, 2004

### American Association of Suicidology 37th Annual Conference

See [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org) or call 1.202.237.2280.

## APRIL 17, 2004

### American Association of Suicidology 16th Healing Conference

See [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org) or call 1.202.237.2280.

*The terrible fire of grief is an energetic furnace, refining character, personality, intellect and soul. It is a catalyst for creation. What is created may be dreadful—a distorted inapproachable monument to despair—or a distillation of experience that is wholesome, useful, bright, and even wise.*

*David Feinstein & Peg Mayo  
Rituals for Living and Dying*

## IN HONOR OF:

**Douglas H. Gaither** from Judy Jackson  
**Robert Bruce Lewis** from Nancy Lappen

## Contributions 2/1/2003 – 4/30/2003: A million thanks for your generosity!

### IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

**Aiko** from Marilyn and Alan Nobori

**Amber Nicole Martin** from Chris and Tranel Chavez

**Andrew Brian Bravman** from Mr. and Mrs. Mike Bravman

**Bradley W. Jackson** from Judy Jackson

**Carol Soukokous** from RealNetworks Foundation

**Jason Kramer** from Guinevere Stever

**Jennifer Ann Brown** from Nina and James Brown

**Jonathan Jacoves** from Mr. and Mrs. Ira Jacoves

**Joseph Loniero** from Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Loniero

**Kenneth, Robert & William G. (Billy) Thomas** from Brent Thomas

**Kris Buhbe** from Maria and Michael Buhbe

**Michael Leo** from Lyn and Marc Cohen

**Paul Greenberg** from Mr. and Mrs. Alan L. Greenberg

**Rebecca Suzanne Lemmon** from Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Lemmon

**Rick Vazquez** from Josie Shahabi

**Tomas Kells** from Robert T. Kells

**Mom and Sister** from Nancy Walsh

*To make a contribution, please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter*

## Lifekeepers Memory Quilt

**We want the world to know our loved ones lived and deserve to be remembered.** All 50 states have come together in this joint effort to educate the world for the need to reduce the incidence of suicide. The two existing quilts have been displayed at national meetings, and we are currently putting together a third. A \$20 fee covers the cost of material, labor and postage necessary to create your visual tribute.

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Send the material and instructions to me:

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

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

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

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

### Mail to:

C. J. Montgomery, P.O. Box 948, Redondo Beach, CA 90277  
or call Catherine at 310.316.2527 for information.

# The Suicide Prevention Center's Minority Outreach Program

In its ongoing efforts to educate the community about warning signs, risk factors and interventions to prevent suicide, the Suicide Prevention Center's Minority Outreach Program, funded by The California Endowment, provided presentations to the following schools and agencies during **February, March and April** of this year:\*

	<i>participants</i>		<i>participants</i>		
2/4	Venice Family Clinic	139	3/18	Legal Aid Foundation	2
2/4	The Village—Gay and Lesbian Center	25	3/18	Assistance League of Southern California	14
2/4	Venice Family Clinic	1	3/18	Legal Aid Foundation	12
2/5	Western Youth Services—Laguna Hills	22	3/19	Valley Comprehensive Health Center	29
2/5	Western Youth Services—Laguna Hills	4	3/24	Las Palmas Middle School	150
2/5	Western Youth Services—Laguna Hills	2	3/24	Maple Center	51
2/10	Broadus Elementary School	29	3/26	Valley Comprehensive Health Center	12
2/11	Vista del Mar Family Services	8	3/26	Valley Comprehensive Health Center	2
2/11	Vista del Mar Family Services	1	3/27	Eastman Elementary School	9
2/13	Sherman Indian High School	65	3/28	National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	24
2/13	St. Mary's Academy	34	3/31	Healthy Start	9
2/13	Sherman Indian High School	5	4/3	Los Angeles Technical Trade College	4
2/18	St. Teresa of Avila Church	46	4/7	Renaissance Career Academy	25
2/20	Angel Step Inn	6	4/9	California State University, Northridge	21
2/20	6th Avenue Elementary	16	4/10	North Family Youth Services	6
3/1	Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center	1	4/11	National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	50
3/6	West Angeles Church	5	4/11	National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	17
3/8	California State University, Los Angeles	13	4/11	National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	4
3/8	Baldwin High School	14	4/14	St. Mary's Academy	272
3/13	Olivue	9	4/15	Latino Psychological Services	8
3/15	Community Helpline	25	4/29	Westridge Schools for Girls	40
			4/30	Los Angeles Harbor College	53

\* **A total of 1,284 people attended these presentations.**

## *I Can Only Hope*

*I can only hope you'll never  
Forget who you are or where you've been,  
And though some may feel differently,  
In my eyes you did not commit a sin.  
You see, Dad, this life was not good enough for you,  
You deserved so much more,  
Living the way that you were was  
Hurting your very core.  
I can only see you in my dreams,  
But I will take what I can get,  
I'm convinced you are my Guardian Angel,  
And I'm so glad that we have met.  
You will never know how  
Much you have given me,  
And the person I have become,  
It's because of you that I have the strength  
To take the pain and move on.  
I can only ask one thing of you Daddy,  
And I only ask because I know you care,  
Please wait patiently for me in Heaven,  
Someday, I promise I'll get there.*

—Melissa Winn

*Reprinted from Survivors of Suicide Loss, Volume VII,  
Issue 4-5: April-May 2003*

## SYMPTOMS OF MAJOR DEPRESSION

- Persistently sad mood or absence of emotions.
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, pessimism or worthlessness.
- Substance abuse.
- Fatigue or loss of interest in ordinary activities.
- Disturbance in eating and sleeping patterns.
- Irritability, increased crying; anxiety and panic attacks.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Thoughts of suicide; suicide plans or attempts.
- Persistent physical symptoms or pains that do not respond to treatment.

## DANGER SIGNS OF SUICIDE

- Talking about suicide.
- Statements about hopelessness, helplessness or worthlessness.
- Preoccupation with death. Suddenly happier, calmer.
- Loss of interest in things one cares about.
- Unusual visiting or calling people one cares about.
- Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order.
- Giving things away.

***A suicidal person urgently needs to see a doctor or psychiatrist.***

## 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 include the author's name and title and the following:

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

Also include the issue date and year the article appeared. Kindly send us a copy of any reprints for our authors to the attention of Deborah Pikul, Editor. Thank you.

# SAS Monthly Meetings

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

## SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Sherman Oaks Hospital, 4929 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Meetings are held in the doctor's dining room on the 1st floor.

**2nd Saturday 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.**

Meeting dates: **Jun 14 Jul 12 Aug 9 Sep 13**

## SOUTH BAY: Call 310.751.5370 if you're planning to attend.

Little Company of Mary Hospital, Center for Health Education Building, Earl Street, Torrance. Please check the bulletin board inside door for meeting room. **3rd Monday 7:30 – 9:00 pm.**

Meeting dates: **Jun 16 Jul 21 Aug 18 Sep 15**

## WEST LA

Didi Hirsch Culver/Palms Center, 11133 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 1 block east of Sepulveda on the north side of the street. The parking lot is in the building. Drive up to the gate and it will open outward.

**3rd Wednesday 7:00 – 8:30 pm.**

Meeting dates: **Jun 18 Jul 16 Aug 20 Sep 17**

*View this newsletter online at [www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org).  
Click on Bereavement.*

## SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

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