



SURVIVORS

after suicide A Program of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006 • VOLUME 19, NO. 4 • PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K

It was as if a city suddenly emerged onto the grassy median at the corner of Westchester's 88th Street and La Tijera Boulevard - the focal point of Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center's eighth annual *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K*. From young children and avid runners, to entire families and volunteers from service organizations, and special guest Sheriff Lee Baca, more than 4,000 people came out to support the race on Sunday, October 8, 2006.

Participants included runners from Students Run LA, which joined our race for the second year. An afterschool intervention program, Students Run LA provides training and mentoring to prepare thousands of middle and high schoolers to complete the Los Angeles Marathon.

The race, the most successful to date, raised funds for Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center. Additionally, the race aims to increase awareness about the devastating impact of suicide in our community.

"More people die by suicide than by AIDS each year in the U.S.," said Kita S. Curry, Ph.D., President/CEO of Didi Hirsch, to the energetic and attentive crowd. "Yet very few people are aware of this, or that there is help, like our Crisis Line, when you need it. This really puts into perspective how crucial it is for us to spread the word."

Awareness was a key element throughout the day. Survivors memorialized their loved ones through banners, unique shirts and bibs while courageously sharing personal stories with the hope of creating discourse about suicide and breaking the stigma that silences so many families.

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SAVE THE DATE!

April 14-17, 2007

American Association of Suicidology
40th Annual Conference

April 27, 2007

Erasing the Stigma Leadership Awards
Honoring the Founders of the
Suicide Prevention Center

See Calendar of Events on page 7

Film Screening Benefits Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center

Independent filmmakers Storie Productions partnered with Didi Hirsch Community Health Center for the Los Angeles screening of its film *jumping off bridges*. Set in a Texas town, *jumping off bridges* is a delicate, authentic portrayal of teenagers and their families as they struggle with the grief of losing of a loved one to suicide. Written and directed by award-winning filmmaker Kat Candler (*cicadas*, *Roberta Wells*), the film features Michael Emerson (Henry Gale on the hit television series *LOST*), Bryan Chafin (*The Patriot*),

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Rita (Sanskrit for Truth) is a global movement to stop suicide and to celebrate life. Rita Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization devoted to using the arts to help survivors of suicide connect with the power of creation, and in doing so, foster transformation.

**RITA STUDIO LA
WINTER/SPRING 2007**

If you have lost someone to suicide or have attempted suicide please join us.

Open Art Studio

EVERY WEDNESDAY 7pm - 9pm
January 17 - June 27

ST. ELMO VILLAGE
4830 St. Elmo Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90019
www.stelmovillage.org

Register by calling 1-866-775-RITA
\$10 per session/sliding scale
www.ritaproject.org

The studio is staffed by a licensed art therapist and graduate art therapy student assistant. Supplies are provided and participants are welcome to bring personal materials. Artistic skill is not required.

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I was also a part of the world and I was not there.

Rita Project

Rita Project, a global movement to stop suicide and to celebrate life, is coming to Los Angeles. Kim Strouse, the founder, answers some questions for our newsletter:

What is Rita Project?

Rita (Sanskrit for "truth") Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization devoted to using the arts to help survivors of suicide connect with the power of creation, and in doing so, foster transformation. We fulfill our mission through Rita Studios, Rita Workshops and Rita Exhibitions to offer programming which fosters healing, assists with suicide prevention education, and raises public awareness of the importance of the arts to mental health. You can find more information at www.ritaproject.org.

How did you get started and why?

I founded Rita Project after I lost my sister, Kristin Rita Strouse, to suicide in October of 2001. I wanted to be in a creative environment with other survivors and I couldn't find one. Grief drove me in the beginning and still does to a certain degree, *Continued on page 4*

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.



Tom's Column

For more than two years I have served as Coordinator of the Survivors After Suicide program. I feel privileged to have had survivors share intimate thoughts and feelings with me during some of their most vulnerable times. It has been my pleasure to serve with SAS volunteers, who are a tremendously committed group of people who care deeply about helping survivors through their healing process.

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

The months to come will be a time of transition for the SAS program. I am going to focus my professional energy on suicide prevention education and research. As such, I am stepping down as SAS Coordinator. Lyn Morris, our Division Director, is currently in the process of conducting a search for a new Coordinator.

I encourage all survivors to help SAS through this period by redoubling your volunteer efforts. When I first began this job, the expertise and support I received from survivor volunteers was essential and invaluable. Please give Lyn and ultimately the new Coordinator the same level of energy and warmth.

Until a new person is hired, please direct any program questions or concerns to Lyn Morris at lmorris@didiirsch.org or (310) 751-5324. As before, administrative issues will be handled by Patricia Serrano at pserrano@didiirsch.org or (310) 751-5373. The dedicated voicemail for survivors is unchanged at (310) 751-5382. My voicemail will now direct survivors to contact Lyn or Patricia directly.

If you or an agency with which you are connected need training or education in the area of suicide prevention, I will continue in my role as Suicide Prevention Educator. My contact information remains the same: trankin@didiirsch.org and (310) 751-5370.

I thank you all sincerely for working with me during the past two years. I expect that I will remain in contact with the survivor community in the years to come.

~ Tom

The Ring

Ellen Lewis
Los Angeles, CA

Writing has always been the way I expressed what I couldn't say. I write poetry, specifically, when I am absolutely emotionally overwhelmed. It just pours out of me then. I wrote nearly a hundred poems in the year after my husband killed himself. I've never been much for talking about dark things, and this was the very darkest thing – it was good to have white paper to hold some of that darkness.

I am still sad. I still don't understand. I am still, three years later, emotionally overwhelmed some of the time. But I'm still here. I think writing helped.

*It was kindness
when Officer Loh
laid the ring on the table.
Things are lost so easily,
or stolen.
He knew that.
I imagine him
taking the ring off
my husband's finger –
squatting down
in that dusty, unfinished room
on the bare concrete
beside my pale husband,
who was growing cold –
seeing on his finger
that small glint of gold.
Not a very expensive ring.
But I can imagine him
imagining me*

*the widow/wife
searching all the places of the
dead
for this small piece
and symbol
of our life.
He does it for me.
He lays it on the kitchen table.
It was kindness,
and I wear that ring now
on a chain around my neck.
It was kindness –
I could see in his dark eyes.
It was kindness, but when I
saw it there on the table,
all I could think was
'til death do us part.
That's what the minister said
when we put them on.*

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

Contributions

7/1/06 - 10/31/06

A million thanks for your generosity!

IN MEMORY OF

Arcel, from Rita Coleen McKenna

Ben and Tom, from Robert Brockish, Timothy Brockish and Jason Dravis

Caisey, from Gladys Narvades

Dear Uncle Dr. Doug, from Christina Andorka Aceves

Dearest Brother Doug, from Debbie Andorka Aceves

Greg and John, from Kate Lyon

Jen Jen's dad, from Sgt. Salju Thomas

Karen and Debbie, from Debra Brand

Chuck Anderson, from Linda Anderson

Adam Badarrama, from Sean Ladd

Bobby Bagby, from Kita and Peter Curry

Jimmy Bagby, from Kita and Peter Curry

Adam Baldarrama, from Jeanne Bonelli, Barbara Burgat, and Tiffanie Yee

Dick Bantz, from Diana Gillespie

Mary Kay Bergman, from Dino Andrade

Billy Bloom, from Anne Bloom

Edouard Botwick, from Barbara Minkoff

Tom Brockish, from Margie Padron

Mary Campero, from Alex Ramsey and Jason Risk

John Carpenter, from Cynthia and Thomas Bryan

Clare Ann Christian, from Ann-Marie Christian

Sallye Clair, from Debbie Tremblay

Laura C. Cole, from Barbara and Melvin Cole

Danelle Cox, from Kita and Peter Curry

Pam Cross, from Sue and George Paoletti

Robert Curry, from Kita and Peter Curry

Glenda Dail, from John J. O'Neill

Dr. Clarence Dodge, from Victoria A. Toberman

Chas Eisner, from Jerry Beckerman

Karen Fisher, from Joanne Pena

Elizabeth Gonzalez, from Edward R. Leavy

Michael A. Gutierrez, from Victoria Posada

Jeff Gutin, from Bernard Cantor and Nancy Vogt, Ph.D.

Robert F. Harris, from Elizabeth Harris

Kristine Danielle Helms, from Nancy Currie

Joseph Hill, from Sharri Tenette

Marty Jaconi, from Vera Jashni, Ed.D.

Peter Jones, from Kita and Peter Curry

Stephen Lazarus, from Barbara and Andrea Lazarus

Angela Leighton, from Steve L. Leighton

Stephen Lelewer, from Marygail Brauner, Sari and Aaron Eshman, and Mary and Stanley D. Lelewer

Mark Levitt, from Mark Magdaleno

Daniel Lichstein, from Jeannie Alley, Lillian and Ellis Berkowitz, Diane and Kendall Bishop, Jackie and Glenn Braunstein, Anette Brown, Denise Brown, Jordan Brown, Sarah Brown, Therese Brown, Betty and Stuart Cotton, Nina and John Darnton, Silvia M. Davis, Alexis Edwards, Kathy Lee Farkas, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Feder, Phyllis Feder, Janet and Ted Fine, Barbara and Robert Gale, Marcia and Saul Gordon, Alison and Jerry Greenberg, Hariett Gruber, Leslie and Barton Halpern, Madeline Hart, Elizabeth and Mervyn Hecht, Lynne and Steve Hiller, Yvette Inness, Evelyn B. Johnson, Wendy and Asher Kelman, Cynthia Kolodny, Barbara and Stanley Leiken, Rita and Charles Levin, Jean and Edward Lichstein, Barbara and David Martin, Kristin McCune, Nancy and David

Milstein, Melvin A. Peters, Paul Rudovsky, Amy Baker Sandback, Judy and Allan Sher, Laura Sinks, Mr. and Mrs. Marc St. John, Irena Wantuch, Amy Warner, Natalie and Frederick Weier, Marilyn and Harold Weiner, Joan and Harry Weintrob, and Nancy Williams

Pete Lusky, from Ted Ball

Tanya Madden, from Joey Barnes, Linda Kaidin, and Andrea Madden

Lanny McCommon, from Mary Halligan and Kathleen Randall

Byrne Miller, from David Slavin

Marc Millstein, from Marcy Abt, Arif Ali, M.D., Todd Anixter, Joseph Arenson, Michael Aronson, Jacqueline Battaglia, Jim Blackwood, Daniel Boockvar, Cadent Financial Services, Andrew Cole, Stephanie Degodny, Amy and Peter Eisenberg, James Fox, Jonathan Gault, Susan Gillham, Vicki Karkomi, James Kaulentis, Frances and Charles Kempler, Adam Krohn, Miranda Langan, Amy and Neal Levin, Megan Lowe, Carter Meiselman, Victoria Milano, Eric Millstein, M.D., Mr. and Mrs. Adam Millstein, Paula Millstein, Stephanie Morton, David Morton, Debra Morton, Beth and Don Newman, Jon Proeh, Josh Rutberg, and Bonnie Sacks

Christopher Minyon, from Michelle Minyon

Elizabeth Mitchell, from Beverly Atkins

Edward Mogil, from Rick Mogil

Tony Montoya, from Patricia Costales Fleming

Michael Morrow, from Linda Hadley

Lutz Mueller, from Dave Tonnesen

Tsige Mulat, from Fisseha Asmerom

Donna Neil, from Cathy and Steve Villalobos

Aiko Nobori, from Ann and Paul Abe, Cynthia Akaba-Nishinaka, Jennifer Anderson, Valerie Arballo, Javier Barraza, Margaret Briggs, Mary Caldwell, Victoria Camagong, Julia Carlblom, Kristin Carlblom, Bernie Castillo, Chi Chang, Connie Chein, M.D., Sandra Collins, Eimie Des Marais, Cesar Espinoza, Martha Espinoza, Delicia Fabre, Gloria Fujita-O'Brien, Jan and Steve Haruta, Jeanne Hayashi, Fujiko Hayashi, Edmond Herrera, Cindy Hotta, Victoria Hsu, Judy Hung, Gary Iba, Janis Imoto, Kay and Hideko Ino, Bruce Ino, Beryl Ito, Amy C. Johnson, Christina Johnson, April Kacena, Mirei Kagawa, Mitsuko Kawaguchi, Karen and Ken Kawaguchi, Debbie Kawamura, Danny Kido, B. Kishi, Jean Kitamura, Bonnie and Mark Komoto, Harry Kuruma, Mary and Eddy Kurushima, Brian Kurushima, Grace Kurushima, Denise Kurushima, Jean Lauricella, M.D., Victoria Leon, Cynthia and Victor Lew, Marcus Lewis, Joan Lozano, Marilyn Marks, Susan Marshall, Cat Martinez, Esther Maruo, Darren Masuda, Eugene Masuda, Joanne Masuda, Colleen and Frank Mattoon, Roberta and Frank Mattoon, Toshi Miyamoto, Naomi Miyao, Vivien and Allen Morita, June and Gordon Nagata, Mary Naruko Nakajima, Ken Nakama, Patsy Nakatsuka, Janet Nippell, Shari and Kenneth Nishi, Martha and Wesley Nishinaka, Joyce Nishioka, Marilyn and Alan Nobori, Linda and Dean Nobori, Michael O'Brien, Caitlin O'Brien, Tim O'Brien, Jessica Oldendorph, Jill and Rick Oliver, Candace and Thomas Oshita, Nancy Palmer, Tsipi Perez, Aura Pimentel, Julieta Quiano, Betty Quon, Wendy Sue Raksin, Karen and Darryl Ramos-Young, C. Risse, Jane Rivera, Suzy Roberts, Lori and Gregory Robinson, Erika Rothenberg, Lisa K. Rowlett, S & P Auto, Mitzi Sadamitsu, Candice Saito, Mary and Kaz Saito, Todd Sasaki, Heidi Sasaki, Carole and Akira Sasaki, Kuniko Sato, Douglas Schneider, Mary Senzaki, Denise Senzaki, Joel Sevilla, Sue Shackelford, Jean Shiba, Margaret Shimizu, Mr. and Mrs.

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Volunteer Highlight: Laurie Woodrow



Laurie Woodrow lost her father to suicide in 1983. At the time she was unaware of any type of SAS counseling. It wasn't until 15 years later that she attended her first eight week group. She found

the experience after such a long interval, "rewarding and cathartic." She then went through the volunteer training program, and in the last year has started to do one-on-one phone counseling and group co-facilitating.

Perhaps it was the discovery of a home base after many years that drew me to Laurie. She was the facilitator of my eight week group. I too came to SAS after losing my father many years before. As a facilitator, she told her story, but mostly she listened to us all. Soon, I found myself sitting next to her

each week, or at least wanting to. There was something comforting in being near her for me. Laurie was honest about her own situation. And she seemed really grounded. For me, to see someone moving forward and doing something positive and constructive with this experience was very helpful.

In addition to co-facilitating groups, she also encouraged me (and all of us) to participate in the *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K*. She is an avid runner and was able to merge her interest in running with the work she does with SAS as a member of the race's organizing committee for the last two years. She also embarked on an individual fundraising drive for an ultra-marathon that she participated in last November. In that twelve hour race, she completed 53.6 miles and raised more than \$5,600 in donations for the SAS program. So for all of Laurie's

volunteer and fundraising efforts as well as her personal encouragement and support, we say thank you.

~ Rachel

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 Lyn Morris at (310) 751-5324.

- 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.

Rita Project

Continued from page 1

but I got on the Internet and researched and read and asked for help. I was fearless. In retrospect, a longing for a sense of purpose and desire to discover this for myself became an urgent need, so this drove the project forward as well.

What do you hope to accomplish in Los Angeles? What have you accomplished in New York?

Rita Studio LA opens Wednesday January 17, 2007 at St. Elmo Village (www.stelmovillage.org). If you have lost someone to suicide or attempted suicide please join us. It's an open art studio for survivors - THE place I wanted to go to when I lost my sister. The goal with the studio (oh, there are so many) is to encourage people to utilize "creating" as a positive coping skill. This is something we can practice at home but the studio is, of course, a place of community, a safe place to let feelings run and find a constructive home. Since Rita Project is a new and innovative service organization, we need to get the word out so people know we exist and that our service is even an option, and because before Rita Project, talking groups were the only choice. We also plan to pilot our workshop curriculum for grades K-12 and college. The workshops serve as an effective suicide prevention education and crisis intervention tool.

Workshops are facilitated by an art therapist. Rita Creative Arts Curriculum for Mental Health is correlated with the National Standards for Health Education and is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. The curriculum provides creative arts opportunities integrated with mental health education.

Rita Studio NYC is open and serving survivors of suicide every Wednesday and Saturday. We have provided workshops for Jivamukti Yoga Center as well as Fordham University, Park East High School in East Harlem, La Guardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts and many others. Outreach is a continuing effort but we are so excited and thankful to be expanding nationally and to be offering this creative service.

What is art therapy?

Art therapy is a human service profession that uses the visual arts to communicate feelings that cannot be expressed by words alone. Clinical experience has demonstrated that the images produced in making art help externalize and resolve internalized fears, conflicts and blocks. (Taken from the Center for Therapy through the Arts - www.therapythruart.org.)

I am not an art therapist. I was a drama major at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, so I understand and gravitate towards externalizing my feelings. I've learned to listen and let the artwork speak to me. There are many benefits to creating. Creating art:

- provides distance to safely express feelings and experiences
- increases self awareness
- serves as a container to hold feelings and experiences
- serves as a record of experience
- encourages decision-making skills
- improves ability to communicate with self and others
- fosters a sense of self esteem, self worth, identity and mastery
- provides a springboard for verbal communication with others

How has running this group helped you?

Creating Rita has in part been about creating a container for my feelings. It's given me confidence. It's given me such a deeper sense of responsibility to myself and to the organization and to the survivors we serve. It's helped me take better care of myself. It's given me a sense of purpose.

How have the participants been affected?

One young woman said to me, "If it weren't for Rita I wouldn't be in grad school." Another said, "It gave me peace within my mind." I think the fact that they keep coming back to the studio is a sign that something is helping.

Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K

Continued from page 1

Signs were posted throughout the expo area informing participants about critical suicide facts. Also to this end, suicide prevention bracelets imprinted with our 1-877-7-CRISIS number were given to all Students Run LA participants.

Increasing knowledge and creating openness is crucial, as is raising funds to support our suicide prevention services. Because of the participants' fundraising efforts, the generosity of those who supported them, and the commitment of our sponsors, we exceeded our goal and had a record-breaking year.

Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center thanks the following sponsors for their support of this event: BET J, East West Bank, Jon and Jolie Jashni, Means Knaus Partners, Donald Mellman, Pfizer, Symantec, White Knight Cleaning Service, Wyeth, and several generous anonymous donors.

Thank you to our terrific volunteers and runners, especially Race Committee Chair Howard Loeb and the Race Committee, who helped with and participated in the race!



1) Didi Hirsch Board of Directors Executive Vice Chair Stan Lelewer and Director of Emergency Services Lyn Morris 2) Sheriff Lee Baca and Didi Hirsch Board of Directors Chair Andrew E. Rubin 3) Marilyn Nobori 4) Mary Halligan 5) The race course 6) SRLA teens viewing a survivors quilt

“jumping off bridges”

Continued from page 1

Rhett Wilkins (*The Puffy Chair*), Glen Powell, Jr. (*Fast Food Nation*), Savannah Welch and Katie Lemon.

In conjunction with National Suicide Prevention Week, the producers screened the film in more than 20 cities across the U.S. and partnered with suicide prevention organizations, mental health advocacy groups and organizations that deal with grief and loss in an effort to raise mental health awareness. The Los Angeles screening was held on November 12 at the Fine Arts Theater in Beverly Hills. Proceeds benefited Didi Hirsch's suicide prevention programs. Many survivors as well as Didi Hirsch staff, board and volunteers attended the screening.

A panel discussion followed the screening. Panelists included Dr. Kita S. Curry, President/CEO of Didi Hirsch, Dr. Norman Farberow, founder of the Suicide Prevention Center, survivors Laurie Woodrow and Ester Ybarra Bryant, Rich Lieberman, Suicide Prevention Specialist for the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the film's director/producer Kat Candler. Actor Michael Emerson, who plays a lead role in the film, was also on hand.

Continued on page 7

Contributions

Continued from page 3

Henry Shu, Keith Skelton, Miriam and Dale Smith, Ann Stalcup, Ethel and Eric Takahashi, Pauline Takahashi, Fumi Tamura, Janice Tarumoto, Asao Tokunaga, Allison Tokunaga, Jason Tokunaga, Nancy Trudeau, Myra Uyemura, Steve Uyemura, Jeff Uyemura, Catherine Villagran, Donna and Nobert Wabnig, Linda and Merle Walline, Christine Wang, Kathleen and Thomas Wheeler, Harriet Wilburne, M.D., Cheryl Williams, Jason Wolin, Sonja Wong, Carol Wong, Warren Woo, Miranda Woodin, Jane Wylie, Lillian Yamaka, Margaret and James Yoshina, Cara and Alan Young, Anthony Young, and Chikara Daiko

Joe Noel, Ph.D., from Kita and Peter Curry

Alicia Oberstone, Ph.D., from Kita and Peter Curry

Alison Peters, from Anne L. Peters

Janie Gage Phear, from Martha Cunningham, Lucille Deligencia, Mary Garcia, and Nancy Phear

Jason Chris Pickett, from Mary and Robert Pickett

Jesse Pohera, from Anna Musso

Barbara Powell, from John Powell

John Gregory Price, from Gloria and Arthur Price

Donna Carpenter Rankin, from Tom Rankin

Wes Robinson, from Lori and Gregory Robinson

Sidney Rosin, M.D., from Laurie Houlihan

Brian Sargent, from May and Rick Luxenberg

Paul Sharples, from Madeline and Robert Sharples

Brian Sheridan, from Carol M. Mathwig

Brett Smith, from Tracy Milstead

Bruce H. Smith, from Ann N. Smith

Ginger Smith, from Wendy Smith Puleri, Nellie Revelle, Liam Smith, Andrea Wood, and Sandra Yanke

Louis H. Smith, M.D., from Harold Rappaport, Linda Smith, and Jackie Tipper

Paul Southard, from Elizabeth Southard

Eric Spencer, from Bobbie Mathers

Mike Staggs, from Emilia G. Parrish

Richard Stohl, from Amy and Todd Bomberg

Jim Thomas, from Jennifer and Adam Drudge

Roy Villalovos, from Jennifer Villalovos and Colleen Villalovos

Johnny Wardlaw, from Charlotte W. Fletcher, Ph.D. and Jeremy Fletcher

Edward R. Wellwood, from Barbara Wellwood

Matthew Werber, from Katharine Werber

James Wong, from Esperanza and Manuel Aguilar

Paul Woodrow, from Laurie Woodrow

IN HONOR OF

Nina Gutin, from Stacey Blum

Vera Jashni, from Jolie and Jon J. Jashni

Anna Musso, from Matt Mullin

Cristina Perez, from Vincent Perez

Survivors After Suicide is privately funded by generous contributions from individual donors, proceeds from the Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K/10K, and grants from private foundations and corporations such as the B.C. McCabe Foundation.

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

HELP LINES

Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center's Suicide Prevention Crisis Line
Los Angeles and Orange Counties: (877) 7-CRISIS (727-4747)
Everywhere: (310) 391-1253

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

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

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

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

Crisis, Grief, and Healing: Articles of interest and forum
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

For survivors, click "Lost A Loved One?" at the top to go to the Survivors After Suicide program homepage (www.suicidepreventioncenter.org); current and past issues of the SAS newsletter are available as pdf's through this site

Fierce Goodbye: From a documentary focusing on survivors
www.fiercegoodbye.com

Friends for Survival
www.friendsforsurvival.org

Grief Net: Grief support; can connect you with various resources
www.griefnet.org

Heartbeat: A peer support group offering empathy, encouragement and direction following the suicide of a loved one
www.heartbeatsurvivorsaftersuicide.org

International Association for Suicide Prevention
www.med.uio.no/iasp

International Friends and Families of Suicide
www.friendsandfamiliesofsuicide.com

Living With Loss Magazine
(888) 604-HOPE (4673)
www.bereavementmag.com

Name a Star: Name a star in remembrance of a loved one
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
California: (916) 567-0163,
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

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/parentssof suicides

Parents of Suicide Support Site
www.parentsofsuicide.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/thespark 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.suicidereferencelibrary.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
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SurvivorsAfterSuicide/>

Survivors of Suicide: A website dedicated to those who have lost a loved one to suicide
www.survivorsofsuicide.com

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Project, Light for Life International: Teen suicide prevention
(303) 429-3530
www.yellowribbon.org

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 11-14, 2007, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA American Association of Suicidology 40th Annual Conference

See www.suicidology.org or call (202) 237-2280

APRIL 27, 2007, 12 NOON, BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 11th Annual Erasing the Stigma Leadership Awards

Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center will honor Drs. Norman Farberow and Edwin Shneidman, Founders of the Suicide Prevention Center, and Tony Award-winning actress and suicide prevention advocate Jennifer Holliday. The Awards will be held on Friday, April 27, 2007 at the Beverly Wilshire Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, CA. This special celebration also commemorates the 50th year of the Suicide Prevention Center. For tickets or information, call (310) 659-5517 or e-mail ets@eventsbyone.com.

FIND EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

See these websites for details:

www.mentalhealth.org/calendar/suicide.asp

www.sprc.org/calendar/index.asp

www.suicidology.org

www.afsp.org

The Bully

**Madeline Sharples
Manhattan Beach, CA**

Paul is a bully.
Always ready to take over my poems.
I was writing about my mother
who starved herself last year,
hanging on for days in a morphine-induced coma,
using up every bit of energy I had
until she died.

And there he was pushing her aside
to get to the front of the line.
He brags so the whole playground can hear.
"My suicide is bigger than hers,
I used a box cutter; she just stopped eating.
Write about me."

And he's right.
Compared to his death
hers was a bump in the road.
He was my beautiful sick boy,
she, a not-so-nice shriveled old woman
who had wished for death for years.
She'd call me a bad daughter for saying this
but I don't miss her at all.

And, here he is again.
The bully
The braggart
My beautiful sick boy.
And he's right.
I miss him.

"jumping off bridges"

Continued from page 5

The panelists discussed the realistic and sensitive depiction of loss that the characters experienced and commended the filmmakers for doing such an outstanding job in conveying those experiences. Survivors Laurie Woodrow and Ester Ybarra Bryant talked very candidly about their personal struggles after losing a family member to suicide. Rich Lieberman offered some very insightful information on the impact of suicide among teens, noting that the film accurately conveys the withdrawal and isolation so many of them feel after losing someone close to them.

Director Kat Candler shared with the audience her motivation for creating the film.

"jumping off bridges is loosely based on a group of friends from junior high and high school. We were a tight bunch, the kind of friends who were my everything. In junior high one of their mother's took her life. I found it so strange how he dealt with it afterwards. It stuck with me. I knew I wanted to write a story about these friendships. I took his mother's suicide as the crux of the story. It allowed me to explore how these friends and his family dealt with the aftermath of her death. It's fictionalized, but the heart of these relationships and the grief and recovery are pulled from those experiences and others that I've witnessed growing up. I find it very interesting how we all grieve in very strange, different and unique ways, and that there is no one way to deal with loss."

In response to the feedback she has received from survivors and mental health professionals, Candler hopes the film will become an educational tool for middle and high schools throughout the country.

Didi Hirsch thanks Kat Candler and Storie Productions for including us in this project; we applaud them for telling this story and for using it as a vehicle to educate others about suicide and suicide prevention.

Life After Suicide

**Mark Vierra
Los Angeles, CA**

I'm a Survivor
You may know me as a
coworker, your childrens'
soccer coach or a member of
your church

I'm a Survivor
I am wounded deeply,
Yet I do not bleed
I have scars to my very soul
Yet you cannot see them

I'm a Survivor
I cry in the market
In my car,
and alone at night

I'm a Survivor
I raise my voice in anger,

At the loved one I lost,
At my God
and at myself

I'm a Survivor
I'm a husband or wife
Mother or Father
Brother or Sister
A lost love

I'm a Survivor
Trying to understand,
Trying to get by
Trying life without you

I'm a Survivor
Because I choose to Survive
Death is not an option
Together We Will Survive

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 Fernando Valley: Sherman Oaks Hospital, 4929 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks. Meetings are held in the doctor's dining room on the 1st floor on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. *Meeting dates: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9*

South Bay: Little Company of Mary Hospital, 4101 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, in the Center for Health Education Bldg. (located behind the hospital). Meets on the 3rd Monday of each month from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. Special note: Meetings will not be held in December, January, or February Meetings will reconvene in March. *Meeting dates: March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18.*

West LA: Didi Hirsch Culver-Palms Ctr., 11133 Washington Blvd., Culver City. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. *Meeting dates: Jan. 17, Feb 21, March 21, April 18, May 16, June 20.*

Eight-Week Groups

For 2007, our quarterly eight-week support groups for those who have lost loved ones to suicide will take place on the following schedule:

Group 1: Begins the week of Jan. 15-20, ends the week of March 5-10.

Group 2: Begins the week of April 2-7, ends the week of May 21-26.

Group 3: Begins the week of July 9-14, ends the week of Aug. 27-Sept. 1

Group 4: Begins the week of Sept. 24-29, ends the week of Nov. 12-17.

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 Lyn Morris at (310) 751-5324.

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) 751-5382

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

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Special thanks to Didi Hirsch's Development Department.

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Click on "Lost a Loved One?" then "Newsletters" for pdf files



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