



"The balm of life, a kind and faithful friend." Mercy Otis

Hope & Comfort

Fall 2006
Volume XVI, Issue X

Survivors of Suicide Loss- San Diego County

Music for a Grieving Heart by Lois Bloom

*Written April 2006
in memory of her son Sammy Bloom*

Soon after our son Sammy's suicide I found meditation/relaxation music helped me to relax and get some much needed sleep. I wondered if music could help me in other ways, so I began listening to a variety of music. It wasn't long before I found that music did help me in various ways. Some music comforted me; some provoked spiritual support; some brought back special memories; some had meaningful lyrics while others reminded me that we may unite somewhere in the future and then there was the music that helped me relax and fall asleep.

The comforting music was a mixture of classical pieces and popular songs. I found listening to classical music serene and peaceful. But both the classical and popular songs in this category helped to calm my over-active mind that was full of questions. The spiritual music helped me to feel closer to God and renewed my strong religious beliefs.

The music that I shared with my son was difficult for me to listen to at first, but in time I felt more comfortable with it and surprisingly it did make me feel closer to him. The music with mean-

ingful lyrics helped me to process my grief by isolating the various feelings I had, e.g. sadness, guilt, anger, relief and acceptance. Furthermore, through the words, it provided a way for me to express my deep love for my son. The music that reminds me we may meet in the future brought to light hope, which comforted me. The relaxation/meditation music freed my mind from anxiety and worry allowing me to relax and fall asleep.

Most of us listen to music and sometimes we sing or hum along. What I'm suggesting is much different inasmuch as one needs to concentrate and focus on what you're listening to. The reason for doing this is to discover how the music is affecting you. While listening, ask yourselves questions like, "Is this music making me feel happy or sad, calm or anxious?" "Is it providing me some relief or not?" "Are the word meaningful or not?" and "Does it remind me of the love we share or other feelings?" After listening, write down the name of the music and how it made you feel. Be patient with yourself and know that this process will take some time and effort. I believe if you're open to working at it, you will reap some benefits. Also understand that over time our feelings can change and that music may

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SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS (SOSL) SAN DIEGO NEWSLETTER

Email—soslsd@yahoo.com

Website—www.soslsd.org

Helpline—619-482-0297

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Survivors of Suicide Loss, Inc., is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, self-help support group system for those who have lost a relative or friend through suicide.

The Hope & Comfort Newsletter staff is dedicated to the primary goal of publishing articles and information, which will be of assistance in the grieving and healing process of our readers.

We welcome your written contributions for inclusion in the newsletter; however, we reserve the right to publish only those articles that are considered to be of benefit to the majority of our readers.

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You Are Not Alone...

Don't be afraid to ask for help from those close to you when you need it. So much hurt and pain go unheeded during grief because we don't want to bother anyone else with our problems. Wouldn't you want someone close to you to ask for help if they needed it? Some relatives and friends will not be able to handle your grief. Find someone with whom to talk. Seek out an understanding friend, survivor, or support group member.

When you need to talk to someone who has experienced a loss of...

Spouse

Marissa O.* (619) 421-6155
Maureen L. (619) 469-3110

Son

Cheryl O. (619) 593-2665
Sarah & Ray A. (619) 596-7491
Steve & Kathie P. (619) 444-8152

Daughter

Marie M. (619) 470-1932
Gen K. (619) 306-3086

Family Member/Friend

Janet H. (Brother) (858) 481-4216
Mindy W. (Sister) (858) 278-9051
Jeanie F. (Friend) (619) 417-2788

Parent

Paul G. (760) 751-3411

*Spanish Speaking



SUICIDE-RELATED WEB SITES

—1000 Deaths

www.1000deaths.com/

—American Association of Suicidology

www.suicidology.org/

—Am. Foundation for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org/

—Crisis, Grief & Healing

www.webhealing.com

—Griefnet

www.griefnet.org

—Griefwork Center, Inc.

www.griefworkcenter.com

—GROWW

www.groww.com

—Meeting of Hearts

meetingofhearts.com

—National Hopeline Network

www.hopeline.com

(**Music for a Grieving Heart*" continued from page 1)

have affected you in a negative way when you first listened to it but could then become helpful. So consider giving it another chance.

Because each of us has their own tastes in music there's the possibility the music and categories I've discussed may not appeal or be helpful to you. Don't let that stop you from working on your own personal music bibliography. Due to space this article only includes two of the categories I've discussed: 1) comforting music and 2) music that reminds me we may meet in the future. Please remember this is not a complete list of music that may help you; this is just the music that I found helpful to me. I sincerely hope that by concentrating on the music you listen to and then sorting out exactly how you feel about it, music will become another resource that will assist you with your grieving.

Comforting Music

Various classical pieces from Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, Mozart, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn

"Love Changes Everything" sung by Sarah Brightman and Michael Crawford

"On Eagle's Wings" sung by Michael Crawford

"Memory of the Trees" sung by Enya

"Memory" sung by Sarah Brightman; Betty Buckley; Barbra Streisand

"The Circle of Life and "He Lives in You" sung by Elton John – album *The Lion King*

"The Gift of Love" sung by Bette Midler

"In the Arms of the Angel" sung by Sara McLachlan - album *Surfacing*

"You'll Never Walk Alone: sung by Barbra Streisand

"Bright Day" sung by Terri Allard and Tim Anderson - album *Before Their Time, Vol III*

"As Time Goes By" sung by Rod Stewart – album *Stardust*

"Always" sung by Kenny Rogers – album *Love Collection*

"Bridge Over Troubled Waters" sung by Anne Murray; Linda Eder and Eva Cassidy

"Wishing You Were Somewhere Here Again" sung by Michael Crawford

Reminders that We May Meet in the Future

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow" sung by Eva Cassidy, Ray Charles, and Judy Garland

"Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth" sung by Cindy Bullens – album *Before Their Time Vol II*

"A new Life: sung by Linda Eder – album *Broadway My Way*

(**Music...*" Continued on page 5)

“Beyond Surviving: Suggestions for Survivors of Suicide”

By Iris M. Bolton, author of *My Son, My Son*

1. Know you can survive, you may not think so, but you can.
2. Struggle with “why” it happened until you no longer need to know “why” or until you are satisfied with partial answers.
3. Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings but all your feelings are normal.
4. Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy, you are in mourning.
5. Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It’s okay to express it.
6. You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do. Guilt can turn into regret, through forgiveness.
7. Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
8. Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
9. Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
10. Don’t be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
11. Give yourself time to heal.
12. Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another’s life. Expect setbacks.
13. If emotions return like a tidal wave, you may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
14. Try to put off major decisions.
15. Give yourself permission to get professional help.
16. Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
17. Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
18. Set your own limits and learn to say no.
19. Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
20. Know that there are support groups that can be helpful, such as Compassionate Friends (for parents of a child who died) or Survivors of Suicide (for family or friends of someone who died by suicide) groups. If not, ask a professional to help start one.
21. Call on your personal faith to help you through.
22. It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, e.g., headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep.
23. The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
24. Wear out your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go doesn’t mean forgetting.

San Diego Bereavement Consortium

1st Annual Awards Banquet

Thursday, October 12, 2006
6:30 – 8:30 pm
Tom Ham’s Lighthouse
Shelter Island

Nominations for awards of excellence are welcome, in the following categories:

**Community Based Bereavement Program
Hospital Based Bereavement Program
Hospice Based Bereavement Program
Mortuary Based Bereavement Program
Faith Based Bereavement Program
Creative Healing Bereavement Program
&
The Doris Howell Award Honoring
Individual Achievement**

For information contact:
**LaVon Switzer 858-499-8901
Twyla Perry 619-294-8000**

Report from Executive Director,
Bonnie Bear

Sitting down to put this newsletter together has been hard as August is a rough month for me. It was four years on August 29th since my best friend and loving husband of 37 years ended his life. A new phase in my life began on that fateful day. I could not go back to the “before”, I knew I could only go on to the “after” and it would be very different. This road is not easy, as you all know only too well. But I have been able to go on, through the grace of God and with support from my loving family and friends. At first, it was like I too had died with Gordon because he was so much a part of me. We were soul-mates and I was left to go on alone. I had a very large, disabling emotional wound that needed tender loving care just as a physical wound requires care. The care for my emotional wound was found in allowing myself time to grieve, to mourn, to be with the pain and not to deny the deep hurt and sadness. Part of the healing was sharing my story with others and listening to their stories. Over time, my thinking changed from mourning to remembering. Part of that remembering has been to gather the family together on Gordon’s birthday and on the anniversary of his death to commemorate his life. Remembering the very best parts of Gordon’s life has been healing for me. His deep depression and untimely death did not define him and he would want his family to move on to helping others because that was such a large part of his life. So, an important part of my healing has been my volunteer work with SOSL. I know that many of you have found healing in helping others and/or by attending a support group. We have two events coming up this fall that provide opportunities for you to remember your loved one and reach out to help others. Please check out the information about the second annual Out of the Darkness Walk scheduled on Sunday, October 29th and the National Survivors of Suicide Day on Saturday, November 18th (Page 6).

MONTHLY S.O.S.L. MEETINGS - SAN DIEGO

Our meetings are held in an atmosphere that is warm and friendly. Anyone who has lost a family member or friend is invited to attend. Feelings shared are kept confidential and discussed only within the confines of the group meeting. Thus, our S.O.S.L. groups provides a comfortable, non-threatening setting to share our experiences and thoughts. Questions are encouraged to assist in coping with the different stages of the grieving process and with the feelings that are particularly intense in the aftermath of suicide - denial, shock, disbelief, sadness, anger, relief (for some), guilt and shame. We end our discussion sessions by sharing something positive that has recently taken place.

September 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6 ABHC	7	8 GSH	9
10	11 ECC, RCG	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 SMH	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 RCG	26 CEBC	27	28	29	30

October 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 ABHC	5	6	7
8	9 ECC, RCG	10	11	12	13 GSH	14
15	16 SMH	17	18	19 ARCcv	20	21 ARCcv
22	23 RCG	24 CEBC	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 ABHC	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 GSH	11
12	13 ECC, RCG	14	15	16 ARCcv	17	18
19	20 SMH	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 RCG	28 CEBC	29	30		

Aurora Behavioral Health Center (Private Dining Room) / ABHC

1st Wednesday @ 7p.m. / Sept. 6th, Oct. 4th, Nov. 1st
 11878 Avenue of Industry, San Diego
 FROM I-15 going south: Exit CAMINO DEL NORTE and TURN LEFT; turn RIGHT at CARMEL MTN. RD; turn RIGHT at RANCHO CARMEL DR.; turn RIGHT at INNOVATION DR.; turn LEFT at AVENUE OF INDUSTRY.
 FROM I-15 going north: Exit CARMEL MTN. RD and TURN RIGHT; turn LEFT at RANCHO CARMEL DR.; turn RIGHT at INNOVATION DR.; turn LEFT at

Encinitas Community Center /ECC

2nd Mondays @ 7pm / Sept. 11th, Oct. 9th, Nov. 13th
 1140 Oakcrest Dr. Encinitas– North County
 From I-5: Take the ENCINITAS BLVD. exit (EAST), Turn RIGHT onto BALOUR DR, Turn LEFT onto OAKCREST PARK DR.

Grossmont-Sharp Hospital /GSH

2nd Fridays @ 7:30 pm / Sept. 8th, Oct. 13th, Nov. 20th
 5555 Grossmont Center Dr, La Mesa - EAST COUNTY
 David & Donna Long Conf. Center, Room 3
 FROM I-8: Take the LA MESA BLVD exit (NORTH) LA MESA BLVD turns into GROSSMONT CTR DR. *Park in SOUTH parking deck (take right off Healthcare Dr).*

Scripps Mercy Hospital /SMH

3rd MONDAY @ 7 pm / Sept. 18th, Oct. 16th, Nov. 20th
 4077 5th Ave, San Diego – HILLCREST (Dining Room 1)
 FROM SR-163: Take the WASHINGTON ST exit (WEST), Turn RIGHT onto 5th AVE. *Use parking deck or park on the street.*

American Red Cross Chula Vista / ARCcv

3rd Thursday @ 7 pm / Sept. 21st, Oct. 19th, Nov. 16th
 311 Del Mar Ave., Chula Vista, 91910
 FROM I-5 S: Take "E" St exit, Take RIGHT at Del Mar
 Look for SOSL sign inside indicating room number.

Clairemont Emmanuel Baptist Church /CEBC

4th TUESDAY @ 7 pm / Sept. 26th, Oct. 24th, Nov. 28th
 2610 Galveston St, San Diego - MISSION BAY area FROM I-5: Take the CLAIREMONT DR exit, Turn RIGHT onto GALVESTON ST.

Riverside County Group/RCG

2nd and 4th Mondays @ 7 pm Sept. 11, 25th; Oct. 9, 23rd; Nov. 13, 27th.
 First Baptist Church of Sun City
 29029 Murrieta Rd. Sun City 92586
 Must call before attending Kathy 951-679-2008 or Laura 951-244-3016

SAVE THE DATE

Shatter the Silence... This is Not My Fault

Mariel Hemingway speaks about suicide and more

Women's Council on Mental Health Spring Luncheon
Thursday, March 8, 2007 Manchester Grand Hyatt

Mariel is the granddaughter of Nobel prize-winning famed novelist, Ernest Hemingway. Still only in her 40s she has survived four suicides within her own family. Fighting what she calls the "Hemingway curse" Mariel has suffered from depression and her own suicidal thoughts. A successful model, actress, author, and mother, she speaks candidly about the genetic tendencies toward mental illness and a childhood plagued with pain and heartbreak. Today, her message is clear; there is a way out, there is help, and as a survivor, it is not her fault. Questions—Call Linda Jones at 858-514-5153.

("Music..." Continued from page 2)

"I Saw You There" sung by Connie Kaldor – album *Before Their Time Vol II*

"To Where You Are" sung by Josh Groban

"A New Day" sung by Celine Dion

For a more comprehensive bibliography of music that may help survivors, see my compilation on the SAS website at www.suicidepreventioncenter.org. Click on "Lost a Loved One?" at the top, then click "Recommended Resources" on the left. Finally, select "Music Bibliography for a Grieving Heart"

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SUPPORT FOR SOSL !!!

We invite you to use the enclosed envelope to make a tax deductible contribution to SOSL. New opportunities for service to the community are developing as we seek to provide hope for survivors of suicide and also reach out to prevent suicide and save lives. Recently we have had several opportunities to work with teens in both support and prevention efforts. Thank you for your help in making this possible.

We are now able to put our newsletter into electronic format so you can receive it instantaneously. You can help us reduce our operating budget and save trees by sending your E-mail address to soslsd@yahoo.com.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Out of the DARKNESS

COMMUNITY WALKS

Walk to save lives...

By walking in the 2006 Out of the Darkness Community Walks to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), you will be walking with thousands of people nationwide to raise money for AFSP's vital research and education programs to prevent suicide and save lives, increase national awareness about depression and suicide, and assist survivors of suicide loss.

Please join us on

Sunday, October 29th, 2006

in beautiful

BALBOA PARK

**In addition to the 3-mile scenic walk...
enjoy musical entertainment, exhibitors, and
our surprise keynote speaker!**

For more details and to register on-line, please visit the walk's official website at:

www.outofthedarkness.org

or call 1-888-333-AFSP Ext13

Happiness is beneficial for the body, but it is grief that develops the powers of the mind.

— Marcel Proust

We would also like to know if you are still reading the newsletter. Perhaps you have been receiving it for awhile and you are now in a different place in your healing. If you would like to be taken off the mailing list, please contact us by E-mail soslsd@yahoo.com, by phone 619-482-0297 or by writing to us at: **SOSL**

**P.O. Box 4325
La Mesa, CA 91944-4325**

CONTRIBUTORS:



Anonymous
"In Memory of Brandon Hathaway"

Delilah Angulo
"In Loving Memory of Matt Angulo"

Bonnie Bear
In Memory of Bob Seldin

Lisa Carlson

Tim and Jayne Cassedy

Dolores Coco
"In Loving Memory of Samuel Coco"

Marjorie Cole

Maria Contrestano (Father)
"In Loving Memory of Luis Ledezma"

Steve and Sharon Elggren (Son)
"In Loving Memory of Troy"

Leslie Frankenberger – "In Loving Memory of Lauren"

Shirlene Gustafson (Son)
"In Loving Memory of Jim Stanifer"

David and Anne Klein (Son Peter)
"We miss you so much"

Mike and Shannon Kurtz (Son Jeremy)

Jim and Pamela Lee
"In Loving Memory of Daniel James Lee"

Edward and Phyllis Mirsky
"In Loving Memory of Seth"

Theresa Onak (Sons Jeff and Sean McQuilken)
"All our love – God Bless"

Linda Prejean (Daughter Danielle)
"Beloved daughter, sister, friend"

Eileen Ryan

Pamela Seago

Irma Shaw (Nancy Garcia) "God Bless You!"

Cheryl Sorric Lewis (Son) "I love you Eric – Mom"

Phyllis Stout

Michael and Margaret Strahm (Son Aaron)

Minnie Wu

National Survivors of Suicide Day

Saturday, November 18, 2006

9:00 am to 12:30 pm

Every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, National Survivors of Suicide Day provides an opportunity for the national survivor community to come together for support, healing, information, and empowerment. Linking simultaneous local survivor conferences around the country through a live satellite broadcast and webcast, National Survivors of Suicide Day helps survivors express and understand the powerful and troubling emotions they experience, and connect with others who have survived the tragedy of losing someone to suicide.

We are broadcasting this program at Mercy Hospital in San Diego this year and will have a local panel after the broadcast to address our local needs. This is a powerful experience that helps us sense the impact of suicide nationwide and to recognize that we are not alone, many others have walked in our footsteps and we can overcome.

Please use the enclosed registration form to register for this healing conference.

Call 619-482-0297 for more information or check our website

www.soslsd.org

Survivor(s):

Michael Poole
 Patty Robbins
 Ideia Spiller
 Linda Bower
 Terry Dubois
 Sally Bergs
 Frances Torre-Foster
 Carmen Battle
 Ami Schweitzer
 Marilyn Lane
 Art & Norino Cook
 Joseph Garcia
 Michiko Lindsey
 Mindy Allen
 Trish Lamb
 Gigi Garza
 Linda Thomas
 Michael Yablun

Lost Loved One:

Mother
 Sister – Sally
 Fiancé
 Son
 Nephew
 Son
 Husband - Michael
 Brother
 Boyfriend
 Son – Michael
 Son – Art
 Wife
 Brother – Art
 Son
 Husband – Paul
 Fiancé
 Ex-husband
 Brother

Date:

September 6, 2005
 September 6, 2005
 September 22, 2005
 September 24, 2005
 September 24, 2005
 September 27, 2005
 September 29, 2005
 September 2005
 September 2005
 October 4, 2005
 October 7, 2005
 October 7, 2005
 October 7, 2005
 October 9, 2005
 October 17, 2005
 October 20, 2005
 October 21, 2005
 October 21, 2005

Beautiful Boy

With a face resembling no other.
 But your beautiful loving mother.
 Your eyes were the bluest of blue,
 And your smile was just you.
 A beautiful soul, a beautiful face.
 Why'd you have to leave this
 beautiful place?

A listening ear that was always ready
 To hear my story, slow and steady.
 And then a simple word you gave me
 Made everything seem so easy.
 A beautiful friend, a beautiful face,
 A beautiful exception to this
 struggling race.

And then you left without a word
 By means of something so unheard.
 Although you've left, although you've gone
 Your beauty will shine on and on.
 A beautiful person that all did enjoy.
 No other could be such a beautiful boy.

– Anonymous: written by an
 18 year old sister left behind.

Suggestions for Coping As a Family

It is important to sit down together to talk, cry, rage, feel guilty and even to be silent. Communication is the key to survival in the aftermath of suicide. At the same time there should be respect for each person's individual way of handling grief. Some family members will grieve privately, others openly, and others a combination of these two styles. In many ways each family member must grieve alone. Here are some suggestions to help with family grief.

- Pay attention to your family members when you're with them. Let them know that you love them.
- Be sensitive to how other family members feel. Listen to what is meant as well as what is being said.
- Accept the other person and what they say.
- Don't give each other the silent treatment. This has many negative effects.
- Sit back and listen. Let other family members have an opportunity to talk.
- Be sure to hug and touch each other at every opportunity.
- If depression, grief, or problems in your family are getting out of control, seek the advice of a counselor.
- Recognize that anniversaries, birthdays and special holidays will be difficult for the family and each member of the family.
- Remember you can't help anyone if you are falling apart. Do what you can do, get help for what you can't do, and trust in the help that God gives.
- Studies show that a bereaved person's self-esteem is extremely low. Survivors should work on their image of themselves and help each family member to think and feel good about themselves.

