

# Survivors After Suicide

YOUR PATH TOWARD HEALING

A Program of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services • July/August/September 2009 • Volume 22, No. 2 • Published Quarterly

## SPC Founder Dr. Norman Farberow Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Norman Farberow, Ph.D., co-founder of the Suicide Prevention Center and one of the world's great pioneers in the study of suicide and suicide prevention, has been selected by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare to

receive the organization's highest honor. Dr. Farberow has spent more than half a century studying the psychology of suicide and suicide prevention.

In 1958, Dr. Farberow and Dr. Edwin Shneidman joined with Dr. Robert Litman to found the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center, the nation's first scientifically and clinically based program to study and prevent suicide. During its first year, the Center established a suicide prevention call line to make mental health clinicians and professionally-trained volunteers available to the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Today, the Suicide Prevention Center is part of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. Many of the Center's programs have become models for other suicide prevention centers around the world.

Since retiring 20 years ago, Dr. Farberow, now 91, has continued to play an essential role in the growth and development of the Suicide Prevention Center at Didi Hirsch. He has generously donated his time to facilitate survivor groups, mentor staff, supervise clinicians, and train volunteers. He continues to provide his expertise to medical and mental health organizations throughout the world, consulting on films and television programs, and advising agencies that provide psychological services following large-scale natural disasters.

*Dr. Farberow is an emeritus Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the University of Southern California School of Medicine. He is the author/editor of 16 books and nearly 100 journal articles.*



Dr. Norman Farberow and Dr. Kita S. Curry

## SAS Newsletter Celebrates 20 Years

Twenty years ago, Lois A. Bloom filled a need by editing and shepherding the first Survivors After Suicide Newsletter. Words of encouragement and personal remembrances have highlighted this newsletter since its inception. Dr. Norman Farberow christened the first edition, reproduced at right, with an introduction outlining the increasing acceptance of survivors groups in the mental health community and a request for needed funds to expand services. Also on that first edition cover is a message from our beloved Lois Bloom, the original editor in chief, asking for contributions to the newsletter and thanking Dr. Farberow and Nancy Taylor.

On this the 20th anniversary of the newsletter, we would like to thank Lois A. Bloom, Debbie Pikul Zent, Rachel Zients Schinderman, our former SAS newsletter editors and all the great volunteers for their commitment to healing. Additional thanks to the dedicated and caring staff of Didi Hirsch, especially Lyn Morris and Rick Mogil. A cheer for our current editor Marilyn Nobori for shepherding the newsletter into the future.

We invite our readers to become contributors. Submit your stories, insights and writings to the SAS Newsletter by sending them to Marilyn Nobori at [SASNews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SASNews@sbcglobal.net).

**NEWSLETTER**

VOLUME 1, No. 1 JUNE, 1989

**SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE**  
A PROGRAM OF THE LOS ANGELES SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER  
A Division of The Family Services of Los Angeles  
1041 S. Menlo Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90006

*The purpose of SAS is 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.*

**Dear Survivors:**  
The recent AAS meeting was exciting not only for its usual presentation of many high level papers, reports on research and reviewing of friendships, but especially for the contribution and involvement of survivors. There were meetings, lunches, a full day of workshops, and a sense of purpose and energy that characterized the full 4 days of the conference. There is no question that the survivors have grown in strength and spirit and have become a meaningful force on the professional and personal scene in this country and Canada. The AAS apparently has recognized the significance of this movement and has incorporated it in some measure into its own structure and function. There is a Survivors Committee (Iris Bolton, chair) and there are plans for an AAS sponsored meeting for survivors in Denver in October, 1989.

The growth can also be seen in the number of services now listed officially by the AAS in the directory they are now publishing. Their last edition for October, 1988 lists 211, while a previous list issued in April, 1988 listed 190. It may be, of course, that these were in existence previously and became only recently known to AAS so they could be listed. Even that fact indicates the strong pulse in this new movement.

Incidentally, glancing over the list, one is struck by the variety of names fashioned to represent the service. As you might expect, the most frequent name is Survivors of Suicide, 81 to be exact. The other titles more frequently used were Survivors Support Group, 10, Samaritans' Safe Place, 9, and others. There were only three Survivors After Suicide, including us, which we think is the most descriptive and accurate of all. Some esoteric names appeared, such as Some Other Solution Society, Heartbeat, Ray of Hope and others.

We ourselves have been growing, mostly by branching out. We have operated groups in Van Nuys and in Torrance for several months now, as well as in the Center. The extended service has made it much easier for a number of people to attend who otherwise would not have been able to because of time and traffic problems. If you know of anyone who would want to attend our program at any of our locations call Nancy.

Incidentally, we're looking for more money so we can extend the service in different ways, for example, by setting up a Hot Line that newly bereaved might use when the need is felt to talk to someone; and a program for adolescents who, all too frequently get left out when the services are offered, even though they may be hurting as much, if not more, than other survivors. We've applied to some foundations. If any of you have personal contacts with foundations, or any funding source, please let us know. Just that little bit of personal help may open a source otherwise closed.

Norman L. Farberow, Ph.D.

**EDITORS NOTE:** This is the first issue of our regular newsletter. The purpose of our newsletter is to keep in touch and to share helpful information. We welcome (need) contributions, suggestions and comments. If you have a contribution (poem, expression of feelings, book, article, etc.) please mail it to Nancy at LASPC. The newsletter will be sent to you four times a year (March, June, September, December). If you do not want to receive the newsletter please notify Nancy. Since our organization is non-profit a contribution of \$5.00 towards costs for the newsletter would be appreciated (if financially possible.) Make your checks payable to LASPC Survivors Newsletter and mail to Nancy at LASPC. Anyone having time to assist Nancy in preparing the newsletter for mailing call her at (213-396-5111).

*Let me take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to our outstanding staff under the direction of Dr. Norman Farberow and Nancy Taylor our coordinator. We thank you all for your dedication and help to our program.* Lois A. Bloom, Editor

*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.*



## *“Where Were You”*

By Rick Mogil, SAS Coordinator

Rick Mogil

I’m sure most of you have played the “Where were you?” game. You know, when someone mentions a major event in our collective lives the question is inevitably asked “Where were you when... “For example, where were you when Louie Armstrong stepped on the moon? Wait! Was it Lance, Jack (for those of us who remember the “All American Boy”)? Oh, yeah, Neil Armstrong. My family was camping on Gaviota Beach, north of Santa Barbara. I remember looking up at the moon that night, thinking “Wow! We’ve finally made it to the moon! Thank you Robert Heinlein!”

(Someday we can all talk about “The Moon is a Harsh Mistress”). We could go on forever about all of the incredible, sometimes catastrophic, events we’ve experienced. The inauguration of JFK, the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of JFK, the Beatles come to America, Woodstock I and II, the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes, and the inauguration of Barack Obama.

But one event, maybe more, overshadows all others. Where were you when your loved one died by suicide? Most of us could recount in minute, painful detail what we were wearing, where we were standing/sitting, what we were doing, and what we were eating. But how many of us remember to whom we turned for support or into whose arms we fell upon hearing the news? Ok, maybe that was too easy. How about when you were not with your spouse, partner or other immediate family, when the pain was too great to remain standing? Whom did you lean on? And, just to mix it up a bit, if you saw someone you loved and cared about, or even a stranger, suffering intense grief and pain, would you offer a shoulder for them to lean on?

My most consistent and greatest source of support after Ed’s suicide was Maggie. She held me and we cried. She consoled me, fed me, and even left me alone when I needed to be. She was, and is, my rock, my comfort. Whom could I turn to or lean on when Maggie wasn’t around? Before I came to SAS, I found support in ALANON. I didn’t say anything at the first meeting as I was embarrassed to mention the word suicide. But at the second meeting, I could not contain myself and, through my tears and sobs, I shared my story. After the meeting, eight people came up to me to say they shared my grief as they had lost loved ones to suicide as well. The first to reach me was my Survivor Angel, Mary Langford. She told me about the loss of her sister Ann and how this group called Survivors After Suicide had helped her in her healing. She gave me a business card of Carole Chasin (yep, our Carole), the Program Coordinator of SAS at the time, and told me to call to get in a group. It took three months of calls from Mary to me (I can be a little stubborn. Right, Mag?) and Carole to bring me into a group. And for that, I am very grateful to have Mary, my Survivor Angel, to lean on.

What’s your story? Whom did you lean on, other than immediate family? Whom did you have lean on you? Share your story at the SAS potlucks (see the potluck article) or in this newsletter. It could make a difference in someone’s life.

Peace and love,  
Rick

## *Volunteer Highlight*

Our Survivor After Suicide groups are provided as a safe haven for survivors to share their loss and to learn coping skills to help them on their path to healing.

We would like to acknowledge the therapists and survivor volunteers who have given hope and comfort to recent group members.

Thank you: Linda Anderson, Lois Bloom, Susan Celentano, Carole Chasin, Mary Gayman, Nina Gutin, Mariette Hartley, Barbara Lazarus, Stan Lelewer, Michelle Minyon, Marilyn Nobori, Ruth Schriebman, David Singer and Debbie Zent.

## *How To Volunteer*

We always need people to share their energy and talents!

- Volunteers for SAS may co-facilitate support groups, offer telephone support counseling, help with filing, plan events, etc.

**Call Rick Mogil at (310) 895-2326.**

- Volunteering as a counselor for the Suicide Prevention Center’s Crisis Line involves seven Saturdays of training and a minimum commitment of one year (one weekly four-hour shift).

**Call Dave Smith at (310) 895-2325.**

## Help Support The Survivors After Suicide Program



Sign up for the 2009 Alive and Running Event  
being held on Sunday, September 27, 2009.  
visit:

[www.aliveandrunning2009.kintera.org](http://www.aliveandrunning2009.kintera.org)

and click on "Team SAS" on the right to join our team  
or to make a donation.

### SUBMIT ARTICLES TO THE NEWSLETTER

Each of us have moments of insight, clarity of events, outbursts of emotion, obstacles faced, milestones passed, etc. Sharing these moments can help us and others continue to process our grief and to hold hope. Sharing them helps connect us and build community. We invite you to submit your moments to the SAS Newsletter by sending them to Marilyn Nobori at [SASNews@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SASNews@sbcglobal.net).

## *The Man of My Dreams*

By Monica Howland

I loved you then, I love you now  
Every time I think of you, I just say, "Wow!"

You're always in my prayers, you're always in my heart.  
In my dreams, you'll play a part.

You stir the moments of joy in my life,  
You're the reason there are tears in my eyes when I cry.

Your photograph alone brings back memories,  
Your spirit will never leave me.

Our souls have touched ever so gently,  
In heaven our love is free.

You're in heaven, I'm on earth, you're the man of my dreams,  
And I'll be alone, until we can once again be a team.

## *Calendar of Events*

**Alive & Running**  
**5K Walk/Run for Suicide Prevention**  
[www.aliveandrunning.org](http://www.aliveandrunning.org)  
September 27, 2009  
Westchester Parkway  
at W. 88th Street, Los Angeles

**AFSP National**  
**Survivors of Suicide Day**  
November 21, 2009

**SAS Winter Potluck**  
December 5, 2009

The SAS Program surrounds us with:

**Shelter**, a place of refuge from stigma and ignorance;  
**Understanding**, from those who have walked this path;  
**Caring**, love and concern from fellow travelers;

**Foundation**, a basis of knowledge, acceptance, finding equilibrium, and ways to pay it forward;  
And **Hope**, that there is life beyond this tragedy.

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

## Still Here

By Marilyn Nobori

My daughter, Aiko, is still with me, even though it has been over six years since she died. When her death by suicide shattered my world and left me in despair, I still wanted to remember her life not just her death. She is a gift to us; the joy of our lives. I wanted the world to stop and wanted death to take me from this pain. I also wanted people to remember her smile, her artistic and musical talents, her love of taiko and origami, but most of all to remember she was here.

Pictures of Aiko went up everywhere. We shared a love for the Harry Potter books in which the deceased headmasters can appear in their pictures. I wanted her to be part of the continuing world. When suicide prevention speakers came to church, I made sure her picture was in the room. On her birthday six months after her death, I had a birthday cake, we went to her favorite restaurant and to see Lord of the Rings, a movie she loved. Her framed picture was in my pocket.

As I journeyed this grief road, others have walked with me. They mention Aiko's name, recall stories, or just shed a tear with me. Some people challenge me with thoughtful questions about how I am feeling or doing. Some just engage me in everyday events and make me laugh.

The picture in my pocket changed to a picture in my locket which I always wore. Also with me was a silver rose ring which was part of a story Aiko wrote just before her suicide. The ring was a connection between her and a happier alternate world. I could not be without either; they physically represented her continued presence in my life. And every year on her birthday, I bought roses for the church altar, adding one additional rose for each birthday.

Four years ago, as I began to facilitate survivors' groups and work with Glendale Adventist Bereavement Program and later Didi Hirsch's SAS program, I was able to pay forward the companionship, hope, and love others had given me. Every year that Aiko's Team completes the *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K* and her taiko

group energizes the participants, is a reminder that she is still remembered and present in our lives. There is good being reflected from Aiko's life, the joyous and tragic.

Many continue to walk with me, encouraging the anxious tentative steps at regaining life. I journeyed from "I can do this" before Aiko's death to the "I can't" helplessness which permeates our lives after a suicide. Then the tentative return to "Okay maybe." With permission to walk away if I needed to, I started and finished the Crisis Line training. And if that isn't a good fit, maybe telephone support, outreach, etc. There is now a "Yes. . .maybe".

Obsession no longer dictates that I wear the locket or rose ring. This year will probably be the last year for birthday roses. There will be 21 this year. But, EVERYDAY I LIVE, and especially those days I use the skills of companionship, listening and being present to another, is proof that Aiko is alive in my heart and present in my life.

I remember and honor you Aiko.

## IN MEMORIAM

DR. EDWIN S. SHNEIDMAN, 1918—2009

By Dr. Kita S. Curry

Renowned pioneer in the field of suicidology and co-founder of our Suicide Prevention Center, Dr. Edwin S. Shneidman died at home on May 15th.

As his failing health confined him to smaller spaces, Dr. Shneidman's mind continued to roam. Last year, he published his 20th book—*A Common Sense Book of Death—Reflections at Ninety of a Lifelong Thanatologist*. Dr. Shneidman had an abiding interest in understanding and easing the psychological pain associated with suicide—a pain he described as psychache. Over the years, many people sought him out after the loss of a loved one to suicide, and he gave of himself generously.

After Dr. Shneidman became homebound, the world came to him. He delighted in the letters he received from

around the world and his many visitors. Despite the gloom associated with his life's work, he was willful, mischievous, and boyishly sweet. He also enjoyed being called a lovable curmudgeon. In 2007, Dr. Shneidman invited me to tea, because he and Dr. Norman Farberow

were receiving Erasing the Stigma Awards from Didi Hirsch. We discovered a shared passion for poetry and more visits followed. I will dearly miss our afternoons of Melville, manuscripts and metaphor.



## Our Summer Potluck “A Time to Share”

By Lois A. Bloom

At our Summer Pot Luck this year the theme/topic was “A Burden Shared is a Burden Lightened” where we were asked to share those personal stories about two somewhat similar themes. The first was for you to tell about that experience after your loved one’s suicide when you desperately needed help and someone reached out to help you. The other experience was when you saw someone who needed help and you kindly responded.

Do you recall that special person who first helped you, other than your spouse or a close family member, the one who was there for you when you were troubled? How did they help you? Whether it’s been a short or long time, I believed most all of us had one dominate individual who we “leaned on”. Perhaps this kind person helped you feel less confused, alone, angry, depressed, guilty, or possibly helped you sort through the unfamiliar circumstances of your loved one’s suicide.

The other experience we asked people to share was a time when you reached out to someone you knew or perhaps didn’t know and helped them. This was a person who “leaned on you” when they were in dire need and you did the humane thing and helped them. Did you sit quietly and listen? Did you hold their hand, hug them, help them with troubling questions or illuminate their path?

Sort through your memory and share one or both events through our newsletter. Your story could be instrumental in changing someone’s life.

When I thought about the special person who stood out for me it was Janet Belland, a gentle, compassionate soft spoken woman. You may or may not know her but she is connected to all of us. I’ll explain that later. First let me tell you how Janet helped me. Only days after our son Sammy’s suicide our physician recommended we call the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center to find out about a possible group we could attend. Janet was the person we talked to. I remember that call like it was yesterday. I told her my thoughts were dominated by my son’s suicide. I felt acute pain, had inner chaos, enormous guilt and was suicidal. I had no desire to eat and the little sleep I got

was troubled. I desperately needed help. After talking to Janet I felt if anyone could help me, it was she. Janet also co-led our survivor’s support group along with Sam (Mickey) Heilig. I listened intently to every word spoken during our eight-week program and consumed as much as possible. Janet played the important role of being my reality tester. She has the quiet reassuring voice of reason. She continued to reassure me that it was important to face my pain head-on, accept the full force of it and work through it by sharing it with others. It took much effort and time on my part but having Janet as an example gave me hope. Without her encouragement and model I believe working through my grief would have been much more difficult. I cannot praise or thank Janet enough. It’s also important to me to thank Mickey Heilig who as I mentioned before was the professional who led our group. He was proficient and kind and provided me with much needed information.

Upon completing the weekly program Janet and Mickey suggested that Sam and I take some training so we could become facilitators with the program. They also encouraged us to become involved with national suicide prevention organizations. Our participation gave me a new direction where I felt perhaps I could prevent someone’s suicide.

Now let me explain Janet’s connection to us. She first came to the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention following the suicide of her brother, searching for help and information she felt only they could assist her with. She learned about suicide but felt a strong need to discuss the death of her brother with others who knew how she felt. In a letter that we received from Janet about the program she wrote “... pushing my feelings about the loss of my brother aside had not resolved the issue nor lessened my pain and confusion about my brother’s suicide ...”

With the guidance and supervision of the professional experts at the Center, Janet came up with the idea along with the help of Sam (Mickey) Heilig, the Executive Director of the Center at that time, to start a suicide support group for persons like herself who were struggling alone. They put an article in the LA

Times saying that they were looking for persons who were searching for “A Life After Suicide.” People responded and so the group began in 1981.

Here is more of Janet’s letter describing the program “... we want to help survivors deal with the feelings of loss, anger, confusion, denial, shock, guilt, pain, bereavement and stigma openly in a supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere and, hopefully, move through their pain and grief to find some personal resolution in order to go forward with life in a positive, productive way. The group is a way of coping for those of us left behind. Death is difficult to deal with. Death by suicide adds a dimension that. Until this time, has led many survivors to silence about the suicide, even within the closest of families. We choose to suffer alone, isolating our feelings. We tend to think we could have – or should have – been able to fix what was wrong with our loved one – been able to stop them. We may *feel* different, but we are certainly *not* ... The group is a place to talk openly about your feelings with the knowledge that every member understands your unique grief situations. The group members work together, sharing experiences and information during the eight weekly sessions, co-led by paraprofessionals who are also survivors and professionals experienced in the field of suicidology. This is one of the first groups of its kind in the United States.”

Does this sound familiar to you? Yup, it’s our own Survivors After Suicide Program (SAS) that began in 1981 because Janet sought out help. I feel all of us should be thankful to Janet and Mickey because the two of them felt it was important to provide help and assistance. The interesting thing is the group model has continued to have the same formula through the years which says to me that Janet and Mickey were “right on” with their strategy. Sometime I’d like for all of you to meet Janet and Mickey. Mickey lives in Santa Monica and Janet now lives outside of San Francisco with her husband.

I hope you have a story to share with all of us at our Winter Pot Luck on December 5<sup>th</sup>. I very much look forward to seeing you and hearing your stories.

## Contributions

January 1, 2009 to June 15, 2009

A million thanks for your generosity!

### IN MEMORY OF

Dellion Dezube Hufford

from Diana Dezube Hufford

Kimmy Von Hagen

from Tommy Bacorn

Kyle Ryan Kubachka

from April and Keith Kubachka

Nicholas Wilcox

from Kristina Wilcox

### HONOR OF

Olivia Louise Baccash

from Jeremy Sultan

*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.*

## 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 Avenue, Torrance, CA 90503  
or call Mary at (310) 316-4392 for information

## Resources for Survivors and Suicide Prevention

### HELP LINES

#### Didi Hirsch Mental Health Service's Suicide Prevention Crisis Line

Toll free in Los Angeles and Orange Counties:  
(877) 7-CRISIS or (877) 727-4747

#### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

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

**TEEN LINE:** Suicide hotline for teens staffed by trained teens  
6-10 p.m.

(800) TLC-TEEN or (800) 852-8336

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

### RESOURCES

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

#### American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

(202) 237-2280

[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

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

(888) 333-2280

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

**Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services:** provides mental health and substance abuse services in Los Angeles County, regardless of ability to pay. Nine sites serve more than 44,000 clients a year

(310) 390-6612

[www.didihirsch.org](http://www.didihirsch.org)

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

#### Suicide Prevention Resource Center

(877) GET-SPRC (438-7772)

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

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

## *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K Walk/Run*

**The *Alive & Running for Suicide Prevention 5K* is scheduled for September 27, 2009. This annual event has special meaning for survivors. For some it is the first public statement that they have lost someone to suicide, for others it is way to remember a loved one, for some it is a statement that they will survive, and for some it is a way to positively impact a world in pain. Here are some comments by survivors:**

**ESTER YBARRA-BRYANT:** Feeling alone and fragile, I decided to walk my first *Alive & Running 5K* in 1999. I was empowered by other Survivors walking along side me. By the time I completed the 5K, my spirit was uplifted. I felt a wonderful sense of accomplishment in memory of Nathan. And, I am no longer alone.

Each year I honor Nathan's memory at the *Alive & Running 5K*. 10 years... It took my mother 10 years to accept my son's suicide. We finally connected when she joined me as a volunteer at last year's *Alive & Running 5K*. It's a treasured occasion I cherish because now Mama Lena understands my dedication to suicide prevention.

**LURIE WOODROW:** *Alive & Running* is an event I look forward to every year. It is significant to me personally as a way to honor the memory of my father by running – an activity he enjoyed throughout his life. But more than that, I appreciate how the race brings the community of people who have lost loved ones to suicide together with those who come out simply to run or walk a 5k, and perhaps leave with a greater understanding and compassion for those in the former group. It's been great every year to see the Students Run L.A. come out en masse to participate in the race. Whether their main goal is to kick off their marathon training season, or simply to have a fun time running with friends, it's reassuring to know that some of them will also leave the race with some small bit of information – whether it's an awareness of the warning signs of suicide, or how to contact the Suicide Hotline – that may one day save a life.

**NINA GUTIN:** "We're running for Uncle Jeff!" That's what my 7 year old daughter, Jamie, excitedly exclaimed as she explained what she and her mom would be doing on that Sunday in September. As we put on our T shirts with his pictures on the front and back, we spoke of how this was another way of showing him how much we loved him, and also a way of helping others who had "really painful feelings," either because they were feeling sad and hopeless themselves, or because they too had lost someone they loved to suicide.

Since losing my brother Jeff, I have been growingly appreciative of the ways in which his loss, unbearably painful at first, has been transformed and channeled into meaningful opportunities for growth. Becoming involved with Didi Hirsch has helped me realize that what I've learned from my grief can be put to good use in helping others, while simultaneously paying tribute to Jeff. Leading Survivors' groups, and helping to raise funds for all SPC/SAS activities which foster suicide education, prevention and survivor support, have allowed me to feel that his loss was not in vain. The sense of community during the *Alive & Running 5K* events lets me know that so many of us care about and support this cause and each other.

After the run, as Jamie and I proudly wore our medals around our necks, we knew that we had done something truly important, and that "Uncle Jeff" would be proud of what we had accomplished in his name.

**STAN LELEWER:** Participating in *Alive & Running 5K*, gives me the opportunity to share with so many others the honor that we give those who we have lost. It is a joyful occasion and gives me the opportunity to do something that positively reflects on Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services and the Suicide Prevention Center. The publicity surrounding this event and the event itself do so much to help us to erase the stigma of suicide. I am so happy to be a part of Didi Hirsch and this wonderful event.

**JOHN GILLIGAN** (of Redondo Beach, father of Brendan Gilligan, who died in 2004 at the age of 21.): The run provides me an opportunity to remember my son, Brendan, acknowledge my loss, and join others in working and hoping for better treatments for those suffering from **mental illness**.

Perhaps **ESTER YBARRA-BRYANT** said it best when she wrote:

I survived my son's suicide.  
I want to help others with their loss.  
The *Alive & Running 5K* is a gathering place.  
We walk...we talk...we share ...and we heal.

Whatever your reason, we hope you join us at the  
***ALIVE AND RUNNING 5K WALK/RUN FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION***  
***ON SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup>!***

VISIT:  
**[WWW.ALIVEANDRUNNING.ORG](http://WWW.ALIVEANDRUNNING.ORG)**  
FOR MORE INFO

### *Save the Date!*

**Alive & Running**  
**5K Run/Walk for Suicide Prevention**  
September 27, 2009  
Westchester Pkwy., W. 88th St.  
[www.aliveandrunning.org](http://www.aliveandrunning.org)

**AFSP National**  
**Survivors of Suicide Day**  
November 21, 2009  
find out more at  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

**SAS Winter Potluck**  
December 5, 2009  
come and share your story  
To RSVP, contact Patricia Serrano  
P: (310) 895-2304

## **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 Mental Health Services.

SAS Program Number: (310) 895-2326

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

Editor: Marilyn Nobori | SASNews@sbcglobal.net

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

Layout: Monty Lawton

Special thanks to Didi Hirsch's Development Department.

### **REPRINT POLICY**

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

*Reprinted with permission from the Survivors After Suicide newsletter, a publication of Didi Hirsch 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 a copy of any reprints for our authors to Editor Marilyn Nobori at her e-mail address above.

Thank you.



4760 South Sepulveda Boulevard  
Culver City, California 90230

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