



New Hampshire Survivors of Suicide Loss Newsletter

2013

NH Survivors of Suicide Loss

Susan Morrison Receives NAMI NH Educator of the Year Award



Since losing her brother to suicide in 1998, Susan Morrison has used her journey of healing to help educate and support others in New Hampshire who have also suffered the loss of a loved one to suicide. In 1998, suicide was rarely discussed openly and few supports were available. Over the past six years, Susan has worked diligently to change that. In 2007, Susan became trained as a survivor of suicide loss (SOSL) outreach provider to offer individual support to new survivors. In 2009, she attended one of the first National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) SurvivorVoices trainings and quickly became one of NH's most active SOSL speakers, sharing her story as a way of teaching about risk factors and warning signs for suicide, giving survivors hope, and providing encouragement that healing is possible. She has spoken at military trainings, college classes, statewide conferences, and media events. She has volunteered her time to co-lead NH SurvivorVoices trainings, has contributed to its development, and shares her personal story on a DVD that is integral to NAMI's national best practice SurvivorVoices training. She helped found the NAMIWalks NH TEAM SOS, participates regularly on the NH SOSL committee, and provides a survivor perspective at NH suicide prevention events such as the annual conference, the Summit, the Suicide Prevention Council Retreat, and SOSL workshops. Susan combines her personal expertise as a SOSL and her professional expertise as an educator to be a powerful driving force behind both suicide prevention efforts and survivor supports in NH.



Governor Hassan Starts Race for Suicide Prevention in Exeter

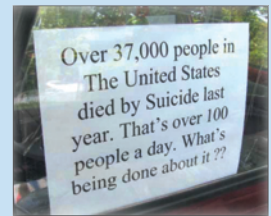
Connor's Climb 5k was organized by the family and friends of Connor Ball in conjunction with the Will To Live Foundation to honor those lost to suicide, to provide hope and awareness around suicide and mental illness, and to raise funds to provide school trainings in NH. The Memorial Day Weekend race raised over 17,000 dollars and brought together many people passionate about suicide prevention.

The New Hampshire Survivors of Suicide Loss Network is a coalition of people bereaved by suicide loss, joined by concerned mental health professionals and community members, that helps to publicize local and national resources that provide support to survivors of suicide loss (SOSL). The network is focused on helping those bereaved by suicide with the unique, profound, lingering grief that suicide subjects us to, and which those of us who have not experienced cannot fully understand. This newsletter was made possible through the support of Friends and Family of Nathan Folley, the Martha Fuller-Clark Foundation, the Ryan D. Hicks Foundation, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.



Loss Survivors Use Creativity to Promote Awareness and Save Lives

Ron Hart & His Truck "Clyde" Pave the Road to Awareness



My truck Clyde and I have been working in Boston for a few weeks now and have been stuck in traffic jams, have been given ace parking, and have been exposing Clyde's cry to everyone. 1,000 or more cars go by me and around me each and every day with people beeping at me with a thumbs up, or even talking to me in stopped traffic. So, if 1,000 cars a day see the message, and I've worked in Boston for 3 weeks, that's 15,000 people that see the message, and that doesn't include others that see the message on weekend jaunts here and there. It would be awesome to have a few more vehicles like mine with factual information on them concerning suicide. In your face awareness raising does work.

My name is Allison Sharpe. I created these shirts in memory of my brother Douglas, who died by suicide in March 2011. My hope is to end the shame and stigma attached to suicide and mental illness. My goal is to create an atmosphere in which we can have an open dialogue about depression and suicide. The shirt depicts the Tree of Life, surrounded by the Lao Tzu quote: "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." The sleeve has the heart graphic shown above. Ideally, one day, these shirts will be recognizable in much the same way as the pink ribbon for breast cancer awareness. If you'd like to purchase a shirt, contact Allison at www.wearyourheartonyoursleeve14@gmail.com.



Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve for Suicide Prevention Awareness

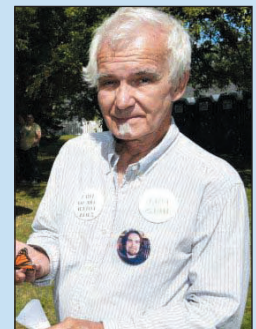
by Allison Sharpe

NH Faces of Awareness Campaign Launched in 2012

by Ron Hart

of a loved one or message and can be worn as a way of opening a conversation with complete strangers about suicide. When people ask "who is on your button?" it provides a wonderful opportunity to talk about the people we have lost and, at the same time, reduce the stigma and shame that surrounds suicide through gentle education. Contact Ron Hart at ggb.tv@comcast.net or come make a button at the NH Suicide Prevention Conference on November 8, 2013.

Last year Team SOS, a survivor of suicide loss walk team at the Annual NAMI-Walks NH, raised funds to purchase a button maker. Buttons can be made with a photo



Unique Events in Western NH Raise Awareness and Funds for Suicide Prevention

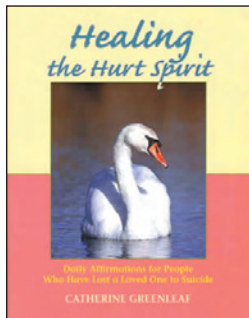
This past April, Kelly D'Errico spearheaded two events in western NH to raise awareness and funds for suicide prevention. In early April, the Deering and Smith Congregational Choirs offered John Rutter's Requiem and, later in the month, a Zumba fundraiser was held with 100 % of proceeds from both events going toward American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). In addition, Kelly and her daughter Deviroux raised over \$5,500 for the AFSP Out of the Darkness Overnight Walk held in Washington, D.C. in June!



NH Survivor and Author Catherine Greenleaf Receives the 2012 Elaine Frank Award



During her 20 year tenure as the Director of the Injury Prevention Center at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Elaine Frank recognized the need to include Suicide Prevention in her work with youth. She helped to develop a grassroots organization, the NH Youth Suicide Prevention Assembly (YSPA) and, upon her retirement, this award was created in recognition of her many contributions to suicide prevention efforts in NH. The recipient of this award is a person who puts in 110%, is someone who recognizes that collaboration is the key element to achieving suicide prevention, and is someone who consistently does "the right thing" regardless of personal, professional or financial gain. This award was presented to both Catherine Greenleaf and Elaine de Mello at the 2012 NH Suicide Prevention Conference.



Catherine Greenleaf, a survivor of multiple suicide losses, is the author of *Healing the Hurt Spirit: Daily Affirmations for Survivors of Suicide Loss*. She is a longtime non-denominational spiritual director and a member of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. In her book and her public presentations, Catherine shares frankly about her own healing journey and how it is possible to live a full and happy life despite suicide loss. Catherine is well known nationally for her expertise on survivor grief, yet she collaborates extensively at home with many NH organizations involved in suicide prevention and healing for survivors and has brought the expertise and resources of out of state organizations back home to New Hampshire.



Every Fall, people who are passionate about mental illness and suicide prevention walk to raise awareness and funds at the annual American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Community Walk in Portsmouth and NAMIWalks NH in Concord. Both walks are wonderful opportunities to connect with other survivors and raise awareness. Monies raised at the AFSP Walk go primarily to fund national suicide prevention efforts and funds raised at the NAMI Walk go to support NH efforts around mental illness, suicide prevention, and survivor supports. All are welcome whether or not they choose to raise money.

At NAMIWalks NH, loss survivors are welcome to join Team SOS or start their own teams to walk in memory of a loved one. To date, in addition to the programs supported by other NAMI NH loss survivor teams, funds raised by Team SOS have specifically funded the following:

- 100 folders of resources for new survivors of suicide loss
- A healing workshop at the NH Suicide Prevention Conference
- Faces of Awareness button maker and supplies
- 40 scholarships for loss survivors to attend the NH Suicide Prevention Conference in 2012 and 2013
- A 1/2 day SoulCollage® Healing Workshop for Survivors
- Hotel accommodations for SurvivorVoices attendees traveling from a distance
- Educational DVDs for use in NH High Schools

Team SOS and Community Health and Healing Funds are available to any NH resident for activities to promote healing or awareness around suicide. For an application, please email Becky McEnany at bmcenany@naminh.org.

Grief

*The wind frowns
Clouds smirk
In darkness*

*Waves crash
Upon a shoreline
And havoc reigns*

*One survivor holds
Tight
To a railing of woe*

*And it pounds
And it pours...*

*The wind clowns
Clouds grimace
In brightness*

*Waves temper
Upon a shoreline
And havoc wanes*

*One survivor holds
Tight
To a railing of glow*

*And it plays
And it pretends....*

by Steven P. Langella

Two Years By Allison Sharpe

It's been two years today since my brother Douglas took his life and since we had our last conversation. The memories of that night are thick, and I slog through them still with stunning clarity. Despite that fact, it feels like decades since I saw him. I miss him terribly and am so sad for all of us who will never see him again.

They say that the second year of grief can be harder than the first. I didn't/couldn't believe it, but for me it was true. It was harder, just in a different way. I think I held my breath and white knuckled my way through that first year. One month gone, two months gone, three months gone... As the shock and trauma began to thaw in this second year, I felt his loss, and even that of my parents, more acutely. As the support began to naturally wane, I found that I had to really start doing the actual work of grieving, not just try to survive day to day as I had done in that first year.

I think of Douglas every single day, often multiple times a day. That's not to say that I don't smile when I remember him, or that I am sad all of the time. I am not. I live. I love. I laugh. I play. I have learned not to take anyone or anything for granted. I spend my time and energy more wisely, and more consciously. I surround myself with positive energy and try (not always successfully) to put good energy out there as well. I have amazing family and friends, and many blessings that I count daily, but Douglas' absence is still palpable. How could it not be? He was my brother, my friend, my adviser, my protector and so, so much more for close to 40 years.

I try to be as gentle with myself as I would be with others, and remember that grief is a journey. It will not end, but it will change and shift over time. Still, there are days when the sadness grips with such strangling hands that it takes my breath away. It squeezes and twists and turns in upon itself, wrapping the whole of me with it. It is a cocoon of sorts, and from within its protective walls I struggle and push against its confines, trying to make some sense of it all.

Although I'm really good at making sense of things intellectually, I struggle with the emotional part. My head can make some sense of it, and can understand the hows, the whys... but my heart screams and cries and throws itself on the floor in a complete mess of sadness, confusion, and anger at the unfairness of it all. That said, I am often (too) good at compartmentalizing, and it takes serious amounts of stress to actually let myself feel those feelings. The rest of the time I carry those feelings around with an edgy numbness like staying in the frigid Atlantic too long. I'm not great at verbalizing my feelings, but have found writing to be a better way to communicate with myself and with others.

Part of my healing process has been to fight to bring awareness and light to the tragedy of suicide. As you've heard me say, depression is a medical condition. It is a medical disease that impacts your brain and your thinking. Those who are considering suicide are not able to think clearly, as it is the brain itself that is ill. We know that emotion clouds our judgment. Happy, sad, angry or otherwise, emotion colors the lens through which we look. At least in Douglas's case, his final moment and ultimately intolerable pain came after years and years of battling the diseases of depression and addiction. As is not uncommon, he shared the fact that, in part, he felt like a burden. I know he (quite



mistakenly) believed that his family would be better off without him. His death mushroomed out, touching so many in so many ways. I can assure you that, not one of us is in any way relieved or better off with him gone. Clearly, quite the contrary. It is important for me that people know that my brother, and others like him, were much, much more than their final moment. Douglas's death does not define him, but rather serves as an example of how sometimes illness resolves, and sometimes it doesn't, too often taking a life with it. I share my story in hopes that you will share your story, and that your family, friends and neighbors will feel empowered to share their stories as well. Imagine being diagnosed with cancer and feeling too stigmatized or ashamed to seek help. Society would cry out at the absurdity of not seeking medical attention when it was available. Please help foster an atmosphere where people with mental illness feel supported and cared for, thus ensuring they seek out the care they need and deserve. There is hope, and help is out there.

If you or anyone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, please, please get help. Talk to your doctor, family, friends, go to your nearest emergency room and/or call 1- 800-273- TALK (8255).

Post note: Re-reading this, I also realized that part of my motivation in writing this is also to normalize the grief process. Our society, friends and family often ask if we are "better", "over it", "moving on", etc. Though clearly well-intentioned, comments such as these can make the mourner feel alone and as if they "should" be "better." What I can say (at least about my own experience) is that I am on a journey. I have not "moved on", but rather am moving THROUGH. The loss of a loved one can be brutal for anyone. Reflecting on my personal experiences, those of my clients, and other survivors of suicide loss, it seems (among other things) that the trauma associated with the actual means of death, the suddenness of the death, the unanswered questions, and the fact death was at the person's own hand, further compounds the grieving process. It is no better or worse than anyone else's grief, just different. So please, be gentle with yourself, and be gentle with your loved ones who are grieving (and I will keep my own advice in mind). I thank you for "listening." I know that professionally I've always recognized the power of storytelling, but the last couple of years has allowed me to reap the benefits personally. So again, thank you.

Allison Sharpe is a member of the NH Survivors of Suicide Loss Speaker's Bureau.



May, 2013 - Seven more speakers complete SurvivorVoices training and join the NH Survivors Speaker's Bureau. If you would like to host a loss survivor speaker, please call NAMI NH at (603) 225-5359.

Healing

*For me
The first spring
Was the second*

*The one before
Being lost
In her death*

*The second
Brought
The earliest sound*

*From a cold
Silent winter
Of fears*

*But the fifth season
After
That hellish winter*

*Brought
The first reason
To dry my tears*

by Steven P. Langella

Upcoming NH Survivors of Suicide Loss Events

Many thanks to the following....

Marsha Chapple for her years of service on the NH Suicide Prevention Council. Marsha is stepping down to focus on the facilitation of her support group and other loss survivor supports. Long-time loss survivor advocate Susan Morrison has been appointed by Governor Hassan to the council with Deborah Baird serving as her alternate. Together they will co-chair a Survivor of Suicide Loss Committee to begin meeting in early 2014. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Becky McEnany at bmccenany@naminh.org.

Lisa MacNaughton for stepping up to facilitate the Concord SOSL Group after Mike and Sue Hill moved several years ago. She now passes the baton to co-facilitators Janyce Demers and Deb Baird.

The many contributors to the new NH Survivors of Suicide Loss booklet including Iris Bolton, Catherine Greenleaf, Rabbi Kamens, Penny King, Stephen Langella, Rabbi Riemer, Dan Wells, Roger Wells, and Michael Whitman.

The many, many NH loss survivors who volunteer every day to reach out to new survivors, offer expertise on committees, provide support at and facilitate groups, display the quilts, host and participate in fundraising and awareness events, submit writing and photos for the newsletter, help with trainings, tell their personal stories to raise awareness and promote healing and much more. You are All greatly appreciated!

Some Spotlights from the Past Year



SOSL Wendy Tapp shares her vido story at Meadowbrook Seether Concert



2nd Annual Memorial Tree Lighting
2012



Compassionate Friends
Garden Social 2012



SOSL Quilts at
NAMIWalks NH 2012



Team SOS & Merrimack
SOSL Group provide
SoulCollage® Workshop



Michael Folley presents funds
raised at Nathan's Ride
for NH suicide prevention

Survivor of Suicide Loss Calendar 2013/2014



Often loss survivors find that attending these activities helps them to connect with other survivors and, as time goes on, many find involvement in advocacy efforts help in their own healing.

September 2, 2013 - Rail Trail Ramble, Lebanon

Join and support NH's Crisis/Suicide Hotline by joining the walk/bike ride on Labor Day to raise funds for Headrest, Inc. Headrest, Inc. answers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calls for NH (800-273-TALK), provides the Upper Valley's 24/7 crisis hotline, and offers addiction and crisis services for those who do not have the ability to pay. For more information, call (603) 448-4872 or mike.cryans@headrest.org.

September 8, 2013 - 3rd Annual Memorial Tree Lighting Ceremony, Concord

In recognition of mental illness awareness, a tree lighting ceremony was established by survivors of suicide loss and will take place on September 8th to help kick off World Suicide Prevention Week in NH. The tree will stay lit for one week in remembrance of people lost to suicide or any cause of death. Bulbs may be purchased in honor of your loved one to raise funds for the National Alliance on Mental Illness NH. For more information, contact Debbie Baird at dbairdsellsnhre@yahoo.com.

September 9-13, 2013: 39th Annual National Suicide Prevention Week

Please go to www.naminh.org for more information about events around NH.

September 15, 2013: 3rd Annual Ride for Nathan, Derry

Please help spread the message that mental illness is a chronic disease that responds to treatment. Let's ride together to help prevent suicide! Proceeds from this motorcycle ride are being donated to NAMI NH. Contact Michael Folley at mfolley@comcast.net.

September 21, 2013: Compassionate Friends Annual Garden Social/Walk to Remember, Manchester

This is a special day where members join together with family and friends in our beautiful Children's Butterfly Garden to celebrate and remember all of our children, siblings and grandchildren. The day begins with a 'Walk to Remember', followed by a cookout and the unveiling of the new bricks added to our garden's walkway, and ending with the magical butterfly release. www.tcfmanchester.org

October 5, 2013: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Out of the Darkness Walk, Pierce Island, Portsmouth

Join the Out of the Darkness Walk to raise money for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Funds raised at this walk primarily support national efforts to understand and prevent suicide through research, education and advocacy. Call (603) 862-4343 or ken.lavalley@unh.edu.

October 6, 2013: NAMIWalks NH, Concord

Join NAMI NH in the largest stigma busting statewide event for mental health advocacy and suicide prevention in New Hampshire. Funds raised at this walk stay in NH to help fund mental health advocacy, suicide prevention efforts, and loss survivor outreach and support. Meet other NH loss survivors, join Team SOS or form your own team. All are welcome. For more information or to register, call (603) 225-5359 or visit www.naminh.org.

October 7-12, 2013: Mental Illness Awareness Week, Statewide

In 1990, Congress established the first week of October as Mental Illness Awareness Week (MLAW) in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. Please go to www.naminh.org for more information about events around NH.

November 8, 2013: NH Suicide Prevention Conference

The 10th Annual NH Suicide Prevention Conference will be held in early November. It offers a variety of workshops and plenary sessions for anyone interested in suicide prevention. Survivors of suicide loss are encouraged to attend but should keep in mind that the day can be very difficult for survivors with recent losses. SOSL scholarships are available. For more information, www.naminh.org or bmcenany@naminh.org.

November 23, 2013: International Survivors of Suicide Day AFSP Annual Teleconference

The Saturday before Thanksgiving will mark the 15th annual AFSP Survivors of Suicide Loss International Teleconference. To organize a site, attend, or watch the webcast online from your home computer go to www.afsp.org.

December 8, 2013: Worldwide Candle Lighting, Compassionate Friends, Manchester :www.tcfmanchester.org.

August, 2014: 11th Annual Paddlepower, Lebanon

Support the West Central Behavioral Health Center in Lebanon by joining this river adventure fundraiser. You'll paddle your way down 25 miles of the Connecticut River to draw awareness to the tragedy of suicide. Proceeds from Paddlepower support the 24/7 emergency crisis intervention services offered to the community by the mental health center. To participate in Paddlepower, call (603) 448-0126.

For more calendar events throughout the year, please go to www.naminh.org.

RESOURCES FOR NH SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS

LOSS SUPPORT GROUPS

For updated contacts, group times, and locations, please go to www.naminh.org, click on support.

CONCORD - Greater Concord Area Survivor of Suicide Loss Support Group, Contact: Janyce Demers, (603)625-9459, didorun@myfairpoint.net

HAMPSTEAD - Coping with a Loved One's Suicide, Contact: Dan Wells, (603)553-0119 or dwells5@comcast.net; <http://nhcopingwithsuicide.com>

KEENE AREA

A Safe Place Support Group, Contact: Program Coordinator, (603)357-5510 or pc@samaritansnh.org; www.samaritansnh.org

LEBANON - Upper Valley Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Contact: Maryanne at (802)484-7719 or Michael at (603)795-4435 or uvsos@valley.net

MANCHESTER - Manchester Survivors of Suicide Support Group, Contact: Marsha Chapple at (603)232-7606 (evenings preferable), (603)663-6412 (days), or mahshah@comcast.net

MANCHESTER - Manchester VNA Suicide Bereavement Support Group, Contact: Chuck Johnson 603-663-4005 or c.johnson@elliott-hs.org

GREATER NASHUA AREA - Greater Nashua Area Grieving Survivors of Suicide, Contact: Diane McEntee at (603)673-7425 or (603)978-7846 (cell), dmcentee1415@gmail.com or Contact: Maureen Sloan at (603)578-5966 or maureendsloan@gmail.com

NORTH CONWAY - Survivors of Suicide Loss Group, Contact: Denise at (603)356-2324

PORTSMOUTH - Suicide Survivor Bereavement Group, Contact: Jayde or Chris to register at SSPCBereavement@gmail.com.

YOUTH GRIEF RESOURCES

CHILDREN'S Good Grief Program - Nashua (800)887-5973, www.hhhc.org

GAPS - (Grieving Assistance Program for Children) ROCHESTER - (603)335-7777, www.victimsync.org

INTERNET RESOURCES - Survivors Road-2Healing.com - www.road2healing.org & The Dougy Center- www.dougy.org

STEPPING STONES - MANCHESTER, Bereavement Support Team at (603)622-3781, www.elliottosp.org

ORGANIZATIONS

Bereaved Parents of the USA - Bereaved Parents of the USA is an organization of families who have grieved the death of a child of any age. NH Chapter -www.bprocessesex.org or call (603)887-4302.

Compassionate Friends - Provides mutual support for parents who have experienced the death of a child (by any means) www.compassionatefriends.org or (877) 969-0010

Hospice Bereavement Support Groups - Many hospices in NH offer general and specific grief groups. Listings can be found at www.nhhpc.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness - NH - Provides outreach and support to NH loss survivor network. www.naminh.org or 1-800-242-6264

Victims, Inc. - Offers one on one and group support to families in NH after a traumatic event. www.victims.org or (603)335-7777

MUSIC

The following CDs were produced by survivors for survivors:

Before Their Time - www.beforetheirtime.org (800) 447-3803

Chaos of the Heart - www.musicforthesoul.org or (877)298-9081

BOOKS

NH residents can access many books on suicide at the NH family Resource Connection at the State Library free of charge. A list of available books can be found at www.theconnectprogram.org or by calling (800)298-4321

New Hampshire survivor of suicide loss Catherine Greenleas has published **Healing the Hurt Spirit: Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide**, St. Dymphna Press, Andover, NH

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS LOSS

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - www.nami.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness NH (NAMINH) - www.naminh.org

American Foundation for the Prevention of Suicide (AFSP) - www.afsp.org

American Association of Suicidology (AAS) - www.suicidology.org

GriefNet (Online Support Groups) - www.griefnet.org

SAVE - Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education - www.save.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center - www.sprc.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE HOTLINES

The Samaritans, Inc. Hotlines (NH) - (603)357-5505 or (603)924-7000

Teen Hotline: (877)583-TEEN

Headrest Teenline: (800)639-6095

NATIONAL HOTLINES

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal call (800)273-TALK or 911
National Suicide Prevention Crisis Hotline (National) - Call (800)273-TALK (8255) answered locally in NH by Headrest

For Military: Call (800)273-TALK (8255), press 1

For Support in Spanish - (888)628-9454

Friends For Survival (National) - (800)646-7322