

2020

New Hampshire Survivors of Suicide Loss Report

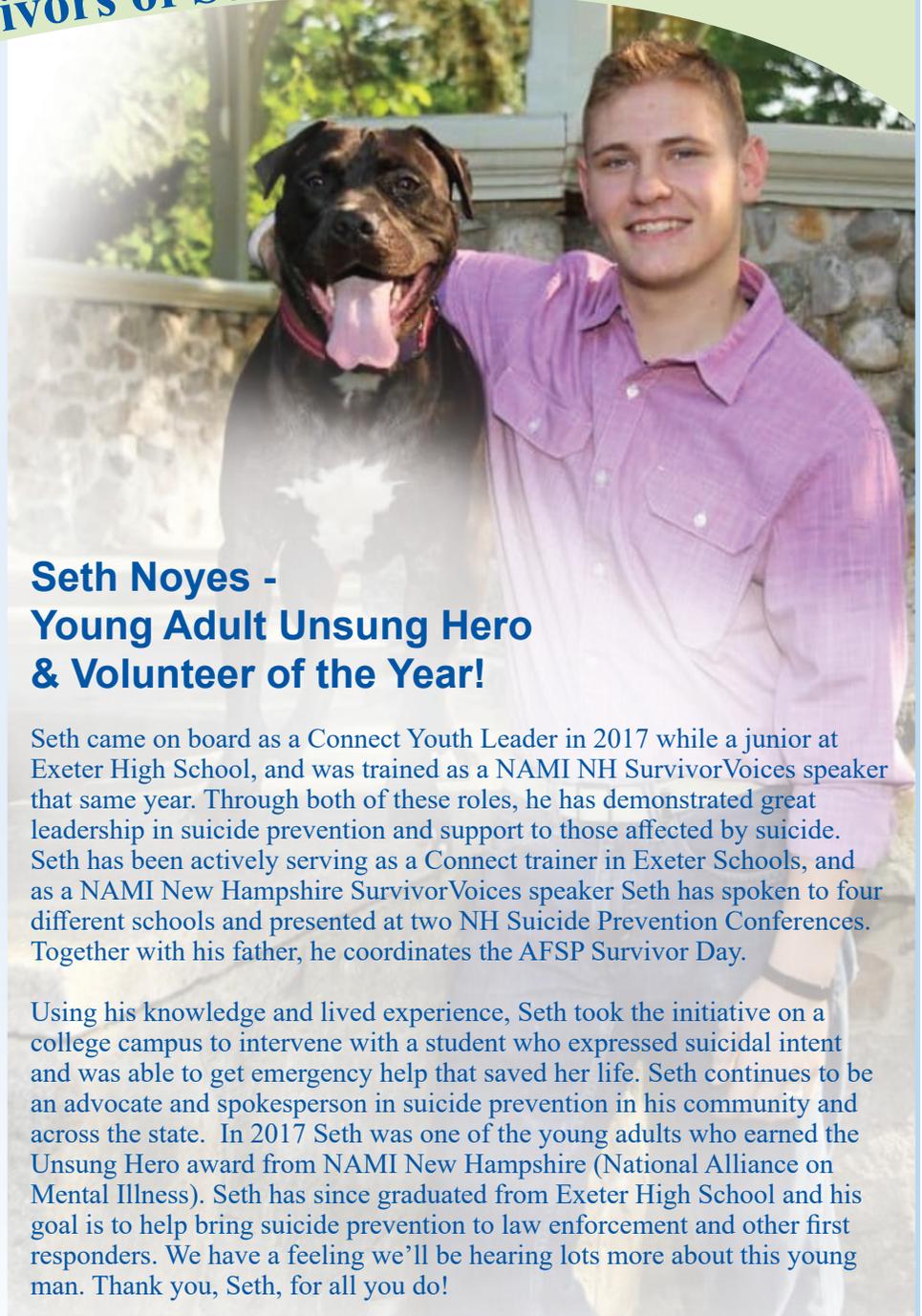


Welcome Kelley Caravona!

NAMI NH welcomes Kelley Caravona (formerly Kelley Gaspa) as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator overseeing the five-year, SAMHSA-funded (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide grant. In this role, Kelley is responsible for working with project partners to implement the grant activities, including building statewide and regional capacity through evidence-based strategies to reduce risk of suicide in youth up to the age of 24.

Kelley comes to NAMI NH with great passion and extensive experience in prevention and public health, having recently been the Assistant Director at Partnership for Public Health in the Winnepesaukee Public Health Region. During her time there, she was responsible for implementing a prior GLS grant in the region as part of broader prevention activities.

"I'm very excited join the team at NAMI NH as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the GLS NH Nexus Project 2.0.," says Kelley. "Having been part of a GLS grant in the Winnepesaukee Public Health Region, I was able to see the positive impact of these interventions in action. I look forward to being part of educating and empowering communities in New Hampshire to recognize and respond to suicide risk competently and confidently."



Seth Noyes - Young Adult Unsung Hero & Volunteer of the Year!

Seth came on board as a Connect Youth Leader in 2017 while a junior at Exeter High School, and was trained as a NAMI NH SurvivorVoices speaker that same year. Through both of these roles, he has demonstrated great leadership in suicide prevention and support to those affected by suicide. Seth has been actively serving as a Connect trainer in Exeter Schools, and as a NAMI New Hampshire SurvivorVoices speaker Seth has spoken to four different schools and presented at two NH Suicide Prevention Conferences. Together with his father, he coordinates the AFSP Survivor Day.

Using his knowledge and lived experience, Seth took the initiative on a college campus to intervene with a student who expressed suicidal intent and was able to get emergency help that saved her life. Seth continues to be an advocate and spokesperson in suicide prevention in his community and across the state. In 2017 Seth was one of the young adults who earned the Unsung Hero award from NAMI New Hampshire (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Seth has since graduated from Exeter High School and his goal is to help bring suicide prevention to law enforcement and other first responders. We have a feeling we'll be hearing lots more about this young man. Thank you, Seth, for all you do!

The New Hampshire Survivors of Suicide Loss (NH SOSL) Network is a coalition of individuals bereaved by suicide loss. They are joined by concerned mental health professionals and community members, who help to publicize local and national resources that provide support. The network is focused on helping those bereaved with the profound grief that suicide leaves in its wake, which those who have not experienced a suicide loss cannot fully understand. This newsletter was made possible by the support of Friends and Family of Phillip's Ride, Michelle Thompson and the Acorns to Oaks Benefit – Suicide Prevention & Awareness, the Ryan Hicks Depression Awareness Foundation, the Memorial Tree Lighting Event, Team SOS, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the many donors who made contributions in memory of loved ones lost to suicide. The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

"There is Hope - you are Healing and you are Resilient!"

“There is Hope - you are Healing and you are Resilient!”



My Son, My Light, My Hope!

Raised in Belmont, NH, I watched my son grow from a beautiful fun-loving boy into a very smart, handsome, humorous and caring young man, and then into a soldier! Michael, or Mickey as I called him, had the ambition and drive for so many things he loved to do, and was an all-around good-natured loving son.

From a young age, he always wanted to go into the military. However, before he could do that, he needed to be a kid. Mickey loved to fish, camp, and be outdoors. When he could drive on his own, he would go to the Florida Keys to fish twice a year. He always told me it was his way of relaxing and enjoying life.

Then in a blink of an eye on July 19, 2017, that all changed. That was the day my 26-year-old son, Mickey, died by suicide. My world fell apart. How was I supposed to manage without him, and not see his beautiful face, his smile, hear his laugh, never hear “I love you Mom” again, get a hug or have our special times together anymore? Just how the h**l was I going to get through this gut-wrenching, unbearable pain after losing him? I was in complete shock and then the numbness quickly set in.

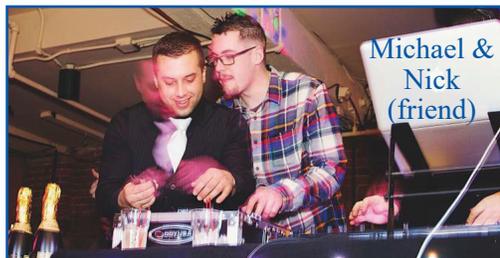
I talked to Mickey on the day he died. We talked almost every day. He seemed agitated, and I had asked if he wanted me to come over. He said he was going fishing. I even offered to go with him. The next day I hadn’t heard from him, and I started to feel a bit panicked when he didn’t answer my calls. Then I sent many text messages, with no word back! I went over to his house to see his car in the driveway with his kayak on top, and I had this sinking feeling in my stomach that something was wrong. I knocked and called his name several times, and then found the building maintenance man and told him I needed to know my son was safe. He opened the door, asked me to stay there while he went in, and then I knew Mickey was gone! My son, my sweet son and only child, GONE!

How could this be happening again? Suicide had struck my life once before. When I was 24 years old my only brother, Marty, took his own life. Marty was much like Mickey and had a sweet, kind soul. I looked up to him – he was my big brother and he helped to take care of me for a good part of my life growing up. I had no one to turn to when he died. No one talked about my brother after he took his life.

The day of the police investigation into Mickey’s death felt like it went on for years. I kept running things through my mind repeatedly. Mickey did share with me previously that he was having a hard time and I know he suffered from PTSD, as he was getting help for that. Then I learned he wasn’t going any longer. I’m not certain the reason for him stopping those visits. Then he said, “You know Mom, even warriors need help.” So why did he stop going? I crumbled, because of course now it was too late for me to try and help him continue getting that help! I have etched in my head how much fear, pain, sadness and hopelessness he must have felt in the moments before he died.



Marty & Sheila



Michael & Nick (friend)

Mickey proudly served his country for 8 years. He even wished at one point he stayed in, as he loved it so much. It was after he got out that I saw the change in him. I knew he was going through difficult times. Mickey wanted a wife and family, but he sometimes had relationship issues. I knew he didn't like his job, and he lost interest in many things like being a DJ with his friend Nick, fishing, camping, and helping to tag sharks for the NOAA fisheries in the Florida Keys. All of that just stopped.

A mother is not meant to walk this earth without her child! I miss everything about him. Even though Mickey's father and I had divorced earlier on, Mickey loved his father, other family members and friends, and they all miss him very much as well. So why did this happen, why? Suicide affects every aspect of the surviving loved ones' lives. My daily life was nearly impossible. I almost lost my job, friends, and relationships.

The first year was a blur. I spent days, weeks, and months crying for my son, every picture, every car like his, every time I saw a young man fishing, every Christmas, every birthday – it seemed like this pain would never end. Then there are the future losses I think about that bring sadness sometimes, such as seeing my son married to the person of his dreams and having the beautiful family he wanted. I will never see the joy on his face and the love of looking into his newborn children's eyes.

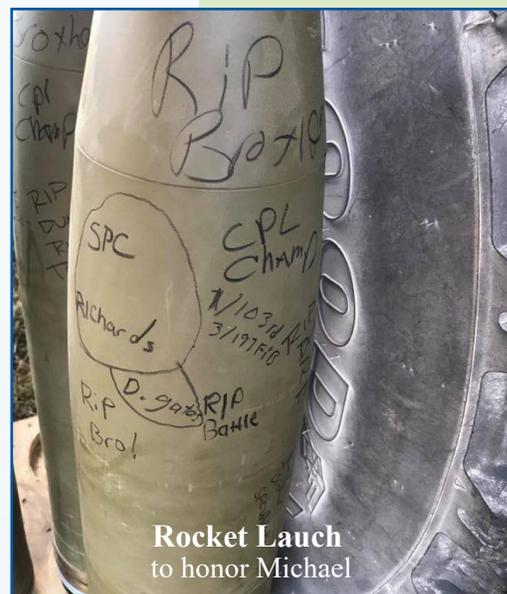
I know there is hope. I do talk to someone about my feelings because I know I can't do it alone! I am lonely for my child, but I know I need to go on for myself and my son. So, I seek all the help I can get for my grief and loss. I'm learning how to channel this experience into something meaningful for me and others. A chaplain at Mickey's service gave me the number to the Manchester Vet Center in Hooksett, and they have helped me get through my early grieving process and still support me today.

I became involved with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and my friends and I did an Out of Darkness Walk for Mickey to help raise awareness for suicide and the stigma that is attached to that and mental illness. I am taking NAMI New Hampshire's SurvivorVoices training and will share my story as a survivor of suicide loss. In honor of Mickey's legacy and his love for people, my goal is to tell my story to help people understand how suicide affects people's lives and the community in which they live. I'm getting more involved in my community to help raise awareness, as I don't want Mickey's death to define his life - his life meant so much more than that to him and me. It's vital to have support and resources for those in crisis and grief!

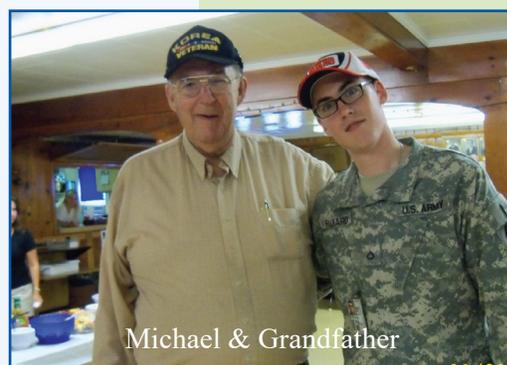
Take good care of you the best way you can, and if nobody has told you today, I love you. I am telling you I do!



Michael



Rocket Launch to honor Michael



Michael & Grandfather



Kathleen Sherman Memorial Award

Kathleen Sherman was involved with NAMI New Hampshire as a SurvivorVoices speaker until a few years ago when she passed away from a medical condition. Susan Morrison and Debbie Baird created the award to honor her memory. The Kathleen Sherman Award is given annually to a loss survivor who is recognized at the annual Suicide Prevention Conference. Kathleen's daughter, Erica, who is also a SurvivorVoices speaker, was the first recipient. Congratulations to the most recent recipients of this honor. We know Kathleen would be proud.



Erica Sherman and Catherine Greenleaf

2018 Catherine Greenleaf

The 2018 winner is Catherine Greenleaf, a published author of the book, *Healing the Hurt Spirit: Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide*. Catherine is also a loss survivor speaker and powerful advocate for suicide prevention. Catherine speaks at events to share her suicide losses and was instrumental in collaborating with DHHS and NAMI New Hampshire to create a Witness Card for those who have either witnessed a suicide death or found someone who died by suicide. Her book can be given to a family or next of kin through the resource packet for Loss Survivors provided by the Medical Examiner's office. She recently published a CD: *Today I Am Healing: Positive Affirmations for Coping with Suicide Loss*.

2019 Penny King

The 2019 winner is Penny King, loss survivor speaker, facilitator of Safe Place Support Group through Samaritans in Keene, and a suicide prevention advocate. She has great passion and compassion when speaking of her son Noah, lost to suicide in January 2009. Penny comforts and helps other loss survivors through the support group. In addition, she also participates in awareness-raising walks for NAMI New Hampshire and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Penny inspires everyone and brings hope to all on their healing journey of grief and loss.



Susan Morrison, Penny King, Deb Baird

NAMI NH wishes to thank **Debbie Baird** for her many years as an employee of the organization. During her time as a Community Support and Education Specialist, Deb worked to improve suicide prevention efforts in the state by providing training in suicide prevention and postvention and working with Regional Public Health Networks and other partners in NH. She also played a lead role in strengthening the loss survivor network, including an expansion of suicide loss survivor support groups in NH. Many people benefited from her dedication to suicide prevention and those affected by suicide loss. Debbie will continue to facilitate the loss survivor group in Concord. We are grateful for her commitment to this field and wish her the best for the future.



Do You Want to Get Involved, but Don't Know Where to Begin?

Here are some ideas:

ATTEND

NAMIWalks NH, AFSP Survivor Day, NH Suicide Prevention Conference, Other Loss Survivor Events

JOIN

NH SOSL Email list
NH Survivors Speakers Bureau
SOSL Subcommittee for the State
Suicide Prevention Council (SPC) or another SPC Subcommittee
A Suicide Prevention Coalition

PARTICIPATE

Facilitate, start, or join a support group
Exhibit or transport a Survivor Quilt
Contribute to the SOSL Newsletter
Share your story through public advocacy

SHARE

Stories on suicide in your local paper
How Community Health and Healing Funds help

For more information Contact: Elaine deMello edemello@NAMINH.org

TEAM SOS JOIN OUR EFFORTS!!

Individuals who are directly and indirectly affected by suicide loss are motivated to raise awareness for mental illness and suicide prevention. During the fall NAMIWalks NH season, Team SOS offers wonderful opportunities to connect with other loss survivors. It is helpful and empowering to know you are NOT ALONE on your journey. Funds raised by NAMIWalks NH Team SOS support education and advocacy provided by NAMI New Hampshire for individuals and families, affected by mental illness and suicide, including suicide prevention efforts and loss survivor supports.

At NAMIWalks NH, loss survivors are invited to join Team SOS or start their own team 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:

- Annual Survivors of Suicide Loss Newsletters
- 300 folders of resources for new Survivors of Suicide Loss
- Healing workshop at the NH Suicide Prevention Conference
- Faces of Awareness button maker and supplies
- 20 scholarships for loss survivors to attend the NH Suicide Prevention Conference
- Hotel accommodations for SurvivorVoices attendees traveling from a distance



New Bill Signed into Law for Suicide Prevention in ALL Schools (RSA, Chapter 193-J)



Governor Chris Sununu signed SB 282, relative to suicide prevention education in schools, with lawmakers, advocates, and parents, into law on Friday, August 2, 2019.



This bill requires school districts and chartered public schools to:

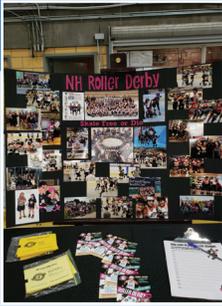
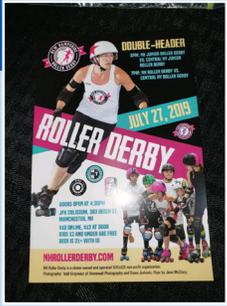
- I. Develop a policy for preventing, assessing the risk of and responding to student suicide.
- II. Provide training for faculty, staff and school volunteers on suicide prevention.

“Suicide is preventable, and it starts with us,” said Governor Sununu. “With passage of this bill our state is taking a major step forward in youth suicide prevention efforts. We know today is not the end of our work, but it is an important first step. In the years to come I look forward to working with families, advocates and members of the legislature to assess the impact of this bill and to continue to develop additional methods to combat suicide in our state.”



NH Survivors of Suicide Loss Events...

some highlights from this past year!



NH Roller Derby - Manchester, NH - July 2019



JOIN US ON AUGUST 29TH, 2019, ACROSS THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AS WE RAISE THE BANNER OF HOPE, AND REMEMBER THOSE WE HAVE LOST TO SUICIDE AND ADDICTION.

CONCORD - STATEHOUSE LAWN
 MANCHESTER - DERRYFIELD PARK
 NASHUA - GREELEY PARK
 DERRY - MACGREGOR PARK
 DOVER - HENRY LAW PARK
 KEENE - CENTRAL SQUARE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29TH, FROM 6PM TO 9:30PM
 AND FROM 6:30PM TO 8:30PM IN KEENE

Produced by RecoverYa!ia
 RECOVER YA!IA
 RECOVERABLE CHANGE

10,000 Candles

Various town parks throughout NH - August 2019



Nathan's Walk



**SurvivorVoices Refresher Training
 Concord, NH - April 2019**



**Memory Tree
 Honoring Suicide
 Prevention Month**



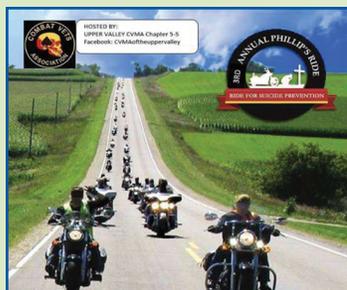
**Team Dave
 Annual Peeper RUN
 Barrington, NH - May 2019**



**International Survivor of Suicide Loss Day
 by ASFP- NHHF Bedford, NH - November 2019**



**TEAM SOS
 NAMIWALKS NH
 Concord, NH - October 6 2019**



**Phillip's Ride
 Lebanon, NH - September 2019**



**Convergence - PRHS
 Plymouth, NH - May 2019**



**Connor's Climb
 Exeter, NH - May 2019**



For upcoming events, please visit: **NAMINH.org**

NH Survivor of Suicide Loss Annual Calendar



April 2020

Annual Compassionate Friends Blood Drive of Manchester and Nashua

Each year this blood drive helps to honor children, siblings and grandchildren by giving the gift of life in their memory. Many Survivors of Suicide Loss help to participate in this drive. For more information, contact: Shirley Cote, scote98@comcast.net.

May 2020

Annual Connor's Climb, Exeter

The mission of Connor's Climb Foundation is to provide educational programs directed toward preventing suicide. This 5K & family walk is the result of their commitment to end youth suicide. For more information, contact: www.connorsclimb.org

August 2020

Annual Paddle Power, Lebanon

Join the West Central Behavioral Health Center in Lebanon on their river adventure fundraiser. Paddle your way 25 miles down the Connecticut River to draw awareness to the tragedy of suicide. Proceeds support the 24/7 emergency crisis intervention services offered to the community by the center. For more information, call (603) 448-0126.

September 2020 (close to Labor Day)

Annual Rail Trail Ramble, Lebanon

Help support NH's Crisis/Suicide Hotline by joining this walk/bike ride to raise funds for Headrest, Inc. Headrest answers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calls for NH (800) 273-8255, 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 email ed.rajsteter@headrest.org.

September 1-7, 2020

National Suicide Prevention Week

Please visit NAMINH.org for information about events in New Hampshire.

September 2020

Nathan's Memorial Walk.

An Annual 5K Memorial Walk for Nathan. This Walk was created for the Nathan Folley Memorial JROTC Scholarship Fund and to help support awareness for those who have been affected by suicide, depression and mental illness.

September 2020

Compassionate Friends Annual Garden/Social/Walk to Remember, Manchester.

A special day where members join together with family and friends in a beautiful Children's Butterfly Garden to celebrate and remember all children, siblings and grandchildren. Visit www.tcfmanchester.org

September 2020 (date TBD)

American Foundation For Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Annual Out of Darkness Walks

Support and raise awareness and funds that allow AFSP to invest in new research, educational programs, advocate for public policy and support survivors of suicide loss. For more information contact: Shamera Simpson, ssimpson@afsp.org

October 2020

Annual 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 Survivors of Suicide Loss outreach and support. Meet other Loss Survivors, join TEAM SOS or form your own walk team. All are welcome. For more information or to register, visit NAMINH.org or call (603) 225-5359.

October 4-10, 2020

Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) Statewide

In 1990, Congress established the first week of October as MIAW in recognition of NAMI's efforts to raise mental illness awareness. Please visit NAMINH.org for more information about events around New Hampshire.

November 2020

NH Suicide Prevention Conference

Offering a variety of workshops and plenary sessions for anyone interested in suicide prevention. Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL) are encouraged to attend. Keep in mind this day can be difficult for loss survivors with recent losses. SOSL scholarships are available. For more information, please contact Elaine deMello at edeMello@NAMINH.org.

November 21, 2020

AFSP Annual International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Held each year the Saturday before Thanksgiving. To attend a location in New Hampshire, host a future site or watch the webcast online, please go to www.afsp.org.

December 2020

Compassionate Friend's Worldwide Candle Lighting, Manchester

St. Anthony of Padua Church, 172 Belmont St., Manchester, NH. Join members and loved ones as they celebrate their children, siblings and grandchildren (lost to any cause). For more information, please contact Shirley Cote at scote98@comcast.net or www.tcfmanchester.org.

Due to COVID-19 some of these events may be cancelled or postponed. Please check directly with the host organization for more information.

Resources for NH Survivors of Suicide Loss

SUPPORT GROUPS NH SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS

For updated contacts, group times, and locations, please visit NAMINH.org, and click on Support.

CLAREMONT – Greater Sullivan Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group, contact: Randy Wiggins, (802) 376-6115, wig@vermontel.net or Connie Kincaid, cjkincaidbrown@comcast.net

CONCORD – Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group, contact: Janyce Demers, (603) 860-8490, didorun@myfairpoint.net or Debbie Baird, (603)-717-5408, dbaird0688@gmail.com

DURHAM – Survivors of Suicide Loss Group, contact: Amy, sosldurhamnh@gmail.com

HAMPSTEAD – Coping With A Loved One to Suicide Group, contact: Dan Wells (603) 553-0119, dwells@sau81.org

KEENE – A Safe Place SOSL Support Group, contact: Penny/Carmen, (603) 357-5510, pc@samaritansnh.org

MANCHESTER – Survivors of Suicide Loss Group, contact: John McNally, john@jjengineering.com, Marsha Chapple (603) 232-7606, mahshah@comcast.net

MANCHESTER – VNA Suicide Bereavement Support Group, contact: Chuck Johnson, (603) 663-4005, cjohnson@elliott-hs.org

MANCHESTER – Community & Active Military/ Veteran's Loss Survivor Support Group, contact: Beth Alves, (603) 624-4366, ext. 2150 or beth.alves@va.gov

MERRIMACK – Merrimack Survivors of Suicide Loss, contact: Linda Vollmer, (603) 578-5966, lindavollmer2995@gmail.com, or Gail McMorrow-Donahue, (603) 930-3640

NORTH CONWAY – Survivors of Suicide contact: Denise Leighton, (603) 356-2324,

PETERBOROUGH- Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group, contact: Marguerite Cheney, (603) 532-8353, mcheney@hesservices.org

PLYMOUTH – Central NH SOSL Group of Plymouth, contact: Barbara LaFlamme, centralnhsosl@yahoo.com

PORTSMOUTH – Portsmouth Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group, contact: Paul Noyes, getsomeshelter@hotmail.com, (603) 770-2987 or Candace Stalier, candace@candacepracom.com, (603) 868-2970

BERWICK ME – Servicing Stratford, Carroll and Rockingham Counties of NH, contact: Jennifer Ordway, jenniferordway@gmail.com or Tina Dodge, fajardo.tina@yahoo.com

YOUTH GRIEF RESOURCES

Good Grief Program – Merrimack, (800) 887-5973, www.hhhc.org

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS

NAMI New Hampshire (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – www.NAMINH.org
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - www.nami.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) – www.afsp.org
Grief Net (Online Support Groups) – www.griefnet.org
SAVE – Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education – www.save.org
Suicide Prevention Resource Center – www.sprc.org
The Samaritans, Inc. (NH) – pc@samaritians.org
Survivors Road2Healing.com – www.road2healing.org
The Dougy Center – www.dougy.org

STEPPING STONES – MANCHESTER, NH

Bereavement Support Team at (603) 622-3781, www.elliotohospital.org

ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

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

NAMI New Hampshire (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Provides outreach & support to NH loss survivor network, www.TheConnectProgram.org, www.NAMINH.org, (800) 242-6264

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

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 by calling (800) 298-4321. New Hampshire survivor of suicide loss Catherine Greenleaf has published *Healing the Hurt Spirit: Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide*, St. Dymphna Press, Andover, NH.

NEW HAMPSHIRE CRISIS HOTLINES

Teen Hotlines (877) 583-TEEN

Headrest Teenlines (800) 639-6095

NATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINES

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273 – TALK (8255) answered in NH by Headrest.

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

CRISIS TEXT LINE: 741741

For support in Spanish: (888) 628-9495

Friends for Survival (National): (800) 646-7322

Trans Lifeline: translifeline.org or (877)-565-8860

Trevor Project: thetrevorproject.org or (866)-488-7386



85 North State Street, Concord, NH 03301
(603) 225-5359 Infoline: (800) 242-6264
NAMINH.org



EARLIER EDITIONS OF NH Survivors of Suicide Loss Newsletters, visit TheConnectProgram.org

“There is Hope - you are Healing and you are Resilient!”