



SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE
King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2022
NEWSLETTER



Website: www.auburnsos.com

e-mail: support@auburnsos.com

WHAT IS S.O.S.?

S.O.S. stands for Survivors of Suicide. S.O.S. groups provide support for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. Based on guidelines established by the American Association of Suicidology, the groups are self-help and peer-led. The goal is to help deal with the loss and trauma and grief associated with that loss. Auburn S.O.S. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization as defined by the IRS.

LOVE GIFTS:

If you would like to remember your Loved One who has completed suicide in the form of a Love Gift it will be mentioned in the newsletter if we have your permission. There are no dues or fees at S.O.S. Donations are always welcome to help defray such costs as printing, postage, and the purchase of books and other material for our lending libraries and other costs associated with the community awareness programs we are involved in.

Donations may be mailed to the address below or made at any meeting. Please make your checks payable to Auburn or Olympia SOS.

Auburn Survivors of Suicide
 28824 21st Ave. S.
 Federal Way, WA 98003

Contact information for each group and its facilitator is on page three.

Many thanks to those of you who have enrolled in the Fred Meyer Rewards program and those who have enrolled in Amazon Smile, naming us as your charity. We receive funds from both quarterly and they make a difference!



We wish you all the best holiday season possible!

IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE:

Please do not hesitate to pick up your phone and call another survivor from a S.O.S. group if you are having a hard time. We've all been there!

Felipa Galaviz	253-376-3198	Lost grandson	Kathy Melsness	253-446-6500	Lost daughter
Andee Church	253-820-1911	Lost brother	Pam Driggers	253-921-7829	Lost husband
Janis Fesenmaier	360-866-2509	Lost brother	Kathy Sterling	206-244-8729	Lost grandson
José Martin	206-228-7413	Lost son	Kathy Crowley	253-471-9412	Lost son

Thinking of You Especially:

Nov 2 Suzanne Gray
Nov 3 Kristin and Charlie Evans
Nov 3 Rick and Ellen Nelson
Nov 3 Jan Strickland
Nov 3 Amanda Woods
Nov 8 Tiffany Heredia
Nov 8 Lori Storm
Nov 11 Nancy Babst
Nov 11 Kristen Fisher
Nov 11 Emily Wallace
Nov 11 Jenine Ellisor
Nov 11 Linda Page
Nov 13 Jessica Tinius
Nov 16 Hayley Sterling
Nov 16 Kieth and Kathy Sterling
Nov 19 Deloris Brodt
Nov 19 Sharon Baughman
Nov 20 Gretchen Price
Nov 23 Jeni Jones
Nov 24 Eric and Kathy Swanson
Nov 24 Dru Gonia
Nov 26 Leslie Phillips
Nov 28 Jon and Shannon Hennessy
Nov 28 Lydia and Larry Garrett
Nov 29 Anna Johnson
Nov 30 Lilli Blaylock
Nov 30 Sandy Payne
Nov Aaron Hendrickson
Dec 1 Britni Owens
Dec 1 Elisa Jungbauer
Dec 1 Jennifer Nelson
Dec 1 Ellen Boldhaupt
Dec 2 Angela Cunningham
Dec 2 Shawna Myers
Dec 2 Cathy Johnson
Dec 4 Andi Church
Dec 5 Stephanie DeVault
Dec 7 Rosemary Schilz
Dec 7 Kelly Paulsen
Dec 7 Glenda Binford
Dec 7 Betty Hamilton
Dec 9 Linda Ferguson
Dec 10 Helen Jordan
Dec 10 David Jordan
Dec 10 Denise and Jim Tiller
Dec 10 Jaclyn Ehli
Dec 13 John Thomason
Dec 15 Jan Lumsden
Dec 15 Lynn Nieland
Dec 16 Emily Gould
Dec 16 Jan Lumsden
Dec 19 Monica Gockel
Dec 21 Shelia Anderson
Dec 22 Marjorie Silver
Dec 23 Kim Dickson
Dec 24 Stacy Mayer
Dec 28 Cliff Whipple
Dec 28 Tiffany Christie
Dec 30 Karen Nash
Dec 31 Gary Keizer
Dec 31 Liz Carr

Lost her husband Marshall
Lost her son Scott Roberson
Lost their son Erik
Lost her spouse Jacob
Lost her father Dean
Lost her mom Diane
Lost her son Randy
Lost her son Garrett
Lost her brother Garrett
Lost her friend Garrett
Lost her son James
Lost her daughter Stephanie
Lost her husband Sean
Lost her son Michael
Lost their grandson Michael
Lost her daughter Toni
Lost her daughter Rachel
Lost her spouse Jeff
Lost her boyfriend Derek
Lost their son Anthony
Lost her daughter Kara
Lost her son Robbie
Lost their son Baxter
Lost their son Phil
Lost her son Jens
Lost her son Andy
Lost her son George
Lost his nephew Xay
Lost her mother Vikki
Lost her brother Arthur
Lost her mother Linda
Lost their mother Edith
Lost her partner Upin
Lost her son James
Lost her son James
Lost her son Travis
Lost her daughter Vanessa
Lost her nephew Joshua
Lost her spouse Jim
Lost her father Larry
Lost her husband Larry
Lost her son Mark
Lost her spouse David
Lost his father David
Lost their son Matthew
Lost her brother Matthew
Lost his son John Matthew
Lost her brother
Lost her former spouse Brian
Lost her friend Sean
Lost her mother
Lost her dad Tim
Lost her daughter April
Lost her dad Mac
Lost her husband John
Lost his brother Scott
Lost his son Lance
Lost her dad Thomas
Lost her son Bobby
Lost his daughter Rachel
Lost her brother Michael



We also remember our loved ones whose birthdays are in the following months:

November birthdays: Diane, Robin, Dean, Marnie, Liberty, Sandi, Marcus, Craig, John, Mac, Randy, Tom, Mark, Edith, Garth, John, Samuel, Caleb, Akira, Austin Kyle, Stephen Lee, Aaron, Steve, Kevin, Robby, Danielle, Bill, Ken, Jeff, Kolby, Alex and Anthony.

December birthdays: Kory, Terry, Victrina, Travis, Michael Shane, Rick, Robert, Paul, Noel, Bobby, Kevin, John, Cameron, Brian, Brad, Randy, Scott, Robbie, Rich, Debbie, Jack, Thomas, Paul, Christopher, Jens, Chris, Jennifer, Derek, Jon, Berry, James and Devin.

We strive for accuracy. If we are missing the name of your loved one or if the information is incorrect please let us know so we can correct it! Send an e-mail to newsletter@auburnsos.com

I've been asked, "what does it mean" on the Registration Sheet "I give permission to include information about my loved one"? Check page 2 of the Newsletter – "Thinking of You Especially" remembers our loved ones, their death date and survivor/s; Page 3 remembers your loved one's name on their birth month. If you give permission, your name and that of your loved one will be included. The relationship will be listed just as you list it on the Registration Sheet.

This is when and where we meet:

The **Auburn** Group meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month (in person). Meetings are held at the Auburn Fire Station located at 1101 D Street in Auburn from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

If you have any questions or need directions, please call Pam at 253-921-7829 or Ben at 253-861-8717

The **Olympia** Group meets on the third Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Westwood Baptist Church in room E-10, located at 333 Kaiser Road in Olympia from 6:30 to 8:15 p.m.

For more information or directions please call Janis at 360-866-2509.

The **Tacoma** Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month on zoom. Meetings are held online, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. For more information please call Colette at 360-490-3454 or coletteaugust@gmail.com.

Do you normally go to Auburn or Olympia and need some extra support? The zoom group that formerly met in Tacoma is available to one and all!

There is no fee to attend any of these groups. For more information send an e-mail to support@auburnsos.com



SOS Holiday Gatherings

Please join us for a special holiday meeting of Auburn SOS on Tuesday, December 20th. **(Note - this is a week earlier than usual.)** The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. Bring finger food to share and a picture of your loved one. We will have two Lifekeeper quilts on display and directions and fabric available if you are interested in making a quilt square of your loved one. The meeting will close with a candle-lighting ceremony.

Our hosts, the Auburn Fire Department participates in the Toys for Tots program; we invite you to bring a new toy to donate. This is a way many survivors commemorate the one they lost to suicide – by giving a favorite toy of their loved one to someone else.

The Olympia Group will hold a special holiday meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 20th at their regular time (6:30 pm.) They will end the meeting with a candle-lighting ceremony.

Suicide prevention starts with everyday heroes like you.



The Out of the Darkness Community Walk is a journey of remembrance, hope, and support. It unites our communities and provides an opportunity to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental health conditions have affected our lives and the lives of those we love and care about.

Suicide and mental health conditions affect millions. Together, we can bring these issues Out of the Darkness and create a culture that's smart about mental health.

Connect With Others and Save Lives

These events give people the courage to open up about their own connections to the cause, and a platform to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention. Friends, family members, neighbors and coworkers walk side-by-side, supporting each other and in memory of those we've lost.

Auburn was well represented at the Seattle Community Walk on October 9th



Here Char and Pam staff our table at the walk. Thank you both!



The Auburn SOS Team!
Joy, Pam, Donna, Aisha and Catherine

"If you have any family traditions you feel up to doing, do them. If you don't feel like doing them, don't. There is no right or wrong way to feel right now... Just listen to yourself and how you feel – but if you are needing help, please please reach out." – Erika A.

It's OK to be sad. It's OK to cry. It's OK to cry at Christmas dinner. But try to remember memories of your loved on those days.

Vicky

Getting Through the Holidays: Advice From the Bereaved

The signs of the holiday season are ubiquitous: holiday decorations in the stores, piped in Christmas carols, holiday displays at the malls, TV programs focusing on selecting the perfect gift, holiday parties and gift exchanges at work. In many cases, this bustle of activity contrasts markedly with the emptiness and despair of grief. As one grieving person expressed it, "I wanted to crawl into a hole and come out after the holidays had passed." Drawing primarily from my conversations with the bereaved, I describe commonly experienced difficulties and ideas that may be useful in dealing with them.

Dilemmas Associated with the Holiday Season

1. **The Requirement of Cheerfulness.** There is an expectation during the holidays that people should be cheerful. One mourner explained that she hated going to holiday gatherings. "I could not be cheerful and I did not want to bring other people down by being sad. Going to such gatherings is like having to eat liver and pretending you like it," she said.
2. **The Mine Field of Social Exchanges.** On many occasions, the innocent remarks of others may put a knife through the mourner's heart. Shortly after the death of their son, the parents attended a holiday dinner hosted by the boy's grandparents. The host began the meal with a blessing, "Thank you for bringing the whole family together." The father was so distressed by this remark that he left the table. "Then I felt even worse," he said, "because I had disrupted the gathering for everyone else." Mourners can be thrown off guard by the remarks of complete strangers—for example, being admonished by a store clerk, "I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday." As one bereaved husband indicated, "You think of many responses, but you keep them to yourself."
3. **The Complexity of Decisions.** Bereaved individuals must navigate a difficult path in deciding how to handle decisions about family activities and rituals. As one mourner indicated, "I was not sure whether I should hang my son's stocking or not. I decided to hang it, because after all he is my son. But my husband thought that this was not a good idea. He told me that I was 'in denial.'"
4. **The Ambush.** During the holidays, mourners are often hit by powerful feelings that are evoked by some reminder of the loss. Consequently, they experience what Noel and Blair (2000) have called "the ambush." As one mother explained, "I was taking out the Christmas ornaments and I came across an ornament that Timmy had made in kindergarten. It had his hand print on it. I dissolved into tears." These events, which are unexpected and unpredictable, are also called "blindside reminders," "zingers," and "grief attacks." Although natural and normal, such experiences are often frightening in their intensity. They literally can take the mourner's breath away and bring about heart palpitations and other symptoms.

Mourner's Suggestions for Things to Try

1. **Plan Ahead.** Don't allow the holidays to just happen. Also, try to use a Plan A/Plan B approach to the holidays. Plan A might involve spending Christmas or Hanukkah with relatives; Plan B might mean having a simple dinner and watching a movie at home. Having a Plan B can be comforting even if you don't use it.
2. **Arrange a Family Meeting** or a conference call to discuss how you would like to spend the holiday season. Let everyone in your family have a say, even the children.
3. **Consider Changing Your Routine.** If you always prepared the family meal, you may want to consider having dinner with relatives or friends. Or you may want to leave town altogether, heading for a cabin in the woods or an excursion to the mountains or the shore.
4. **Take Charge of Your Social Life.** Although you may not feel like getting together with anyone, consider accepting a few invitations to be with close family or friends. Choose to be around people who make you feel comfortable and safe. Avoid social events that seem more like obligation.
5. **Scale Back.** Because grief robs us of our emotional and physical energy, consider cutting back on such holiday tasks as sending cards, baking, decorating, or putting up a tree. Some of these activities may be painful to execute in light of the loss. One woman who lost a child stated that, "It broke my heart to write three names on the holiday cards instead of four, so I stopped sending cards." Let others know that you may not be able to do things that you have done in the past.
6. **Be Gentle With Yourself.** Accept that feelings of anguish are difficult to avoid during the holiday season. Do not expect too much of yourself, and recognize that you are doing the best you can.

7. **Have an Exit Strategy.** In many cases, it is difficult for mourners to be around a lot of people. If they do go to a social gathering, they may not want to stay very long. This problem can be dealt with by developing an exit strategy in advance. For example, a widower may tell the hostess that, "I may need to leave early because I get tired easily"
8. **Honor Your Loved One's Memory.** Some people have maintained that coming up with ways to do this can bring a positive focus to our grief. There are many ways to remember the person who died: share your favorite stories about him; light a candle in remembrance; make a donation in her name. You might also consider making a list of positive qualities that your loved one brought into the world. Another idea is to spend time working on a goal or value that was important to the deceased. If your father was very involved in conservation efforts, for example, you might volunteer your time to a group working towards conservation, or consider making a donation to this cause.
9. **Find People Who Will Provide Support.** When people are already experiencing the great stress of grief, the additional strains of the holiday season can create distress that is almost unbearable. Thus it is important to identify those relatives and friends whom you feel are good listeners, and share your feelings with them. It may also help to recruit support for specific tasks that are particularly difficult. For example, a bereaved father found it heart-wrenching to go Christmas shopping alone because it upset him to encounter presents his daughter would have enjoyed. He asked a neighbor to accompany him to the mall so that he could purchase presents for his surviving children. "John helped me to focus so that I could get the job done," he said.
10. **Consider Attending a Support Group.** At this time of year, it can be particularly useful to interact with people who have experienced a loss that is similar to yours. Such individuals are likely to understand exactly what you are going through. In many cases, members will also be able to share strategies for dealing with the challenges of the holidays. As Rosof (1994) has indicated, those who have experienced a similar loss can also help us to understand that our feelings and fears are normal under the circumstances.

Because of the difficulties inherent at this time of year, it is easy for mourners to feel that they are making little headway in dealing with their loss. Noel and Blair (2000) have suggested that mourners may be moving forward even when they are unaware of it. According to these authors, "Wherever you are in the grief process... We know it's hard—and we also know it gets less hard. The next time a special occasion, anniversary or holiday comes around you will feel a little more in control, a little less pained, the situation will be a little less difficult and you will begin to celebrate life again—one day".

We are healing a broken heart. Not a broken leg. The process of healing from loss is as unique and different for everyone.

Angie Cartwright

FIRST THANKSGIVING

The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They'll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.
These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.
I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I'm thankful that she came.



Though she's gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.
So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute's all it takes.

Written by [Genesse Gentry](#), November 12, 2009
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from *Stars in the Deepest Night –
After the Death of a Child*

After the Ashes

Beginning again and again;
first it was just getting through
each day full of never ending
lists of things to do.
then, a deeper start
in my created space
(that would be too compact for you.)

Now there is a new January
that at the moment
looks less haunted,
looks hopeful.
I approach it cautiously
with possibility
of life's magic returning.



Written by Elizabeth St. Louis ,
a member of the Olympia Group

Others will grieve differently than you, even when experiencing the same loss.

Human relationships are both unique and complex. Our experiences of suicide loss are a reflection of our individual relationships with our loved one. No one on the planet had the exact relationship that you had with the person you lost. Let yourself grieve the way you need to grieve.



Weather Alert!

If the weather is inclement (as in 'snow'!) we will follow the guidelines of the local school district as to whether or not to cancel our meeting.

Donations are always appreciated and are tax deductible



YOUR DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED, APPRECIATED AND ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

Please mail your donations to:

28824 21st Ave. S., Federal Way, WA. 98003

In memory of: _____

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Auburn SOS
28824 21st Ave. S.
Federal Way, WA 98003

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*The reality is that we don't forget, move on,
And have closure, but rather
We honor, we remember, and
incorporate our deceased children and siblings
into our lives in a new way.
In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive
in your mind and heart
is an important part of your healing journey.*

Harriet Schiff, author of 'The Bereaved Parent'