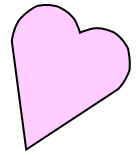




SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups



JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2024 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.

To all of you who left something in the donation boxes, thank you! You may not get mentioned by name – but please know that you are appreciated!

Many, many thanks for a love gift from Jane Hower in memory of her son Wesley.

Whether you donate by cash at a meeting or by sending in a check – it all goes to spread the word about suicide prevention and to care for suicide survivors.

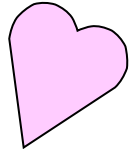
IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE:

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 Nydegger	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:

Jan	1	Pamela Erhardt	<i>Lost her husband Craig</i>
Jan	1	Judy Robinson	<i>Lost her boyfriend Philip</i>
Jan	2	Oneal Nichols	<i>Lost his son Jack</i>
Jan	2	Laura Cordle	<i>Lost her father Anthony</i>
Jan	3	Jane Hower	<i>Lost her son Wesley</i>
Jan	4	Jim & Joann O'Neill	<i>Lost their son Jim</i>
Jan	8	Chris Patten	<i>Lost his son Zachary</i>
Jan	8	Allison Murphy	<i>Lost her boyfriend Zachary</i>
Jan	10	Karen Schneider and William Stratton	<i>Lost their son Benjamin</i>
Jan	10	Timothy Fisher	<i>Lost his brother-in-law Garrett</i>
Jan	11	Joseph and Karen Smolar	<i>Lost their son Matthew</i>
Jan	11	Hope Haynie	<i>Lost her friend Jason</i>
Jan	11	Kelsi Opland	<i>Lost her fiancé Jason</i>
Jan	12	Diane Farrell	<i>Lost her husband Dean</i>
Jan	12	Pat Deasy	<i>Lost father Clyde Vig</i>
Jan	12	David Fulford	<i>Lost his wife Cornina</i>
Jan	12	Ken and Lisa Corkum	<i>Lost their son Chris</i>
Jan	13	Doug Whitcomb	<i>Lost his son Scott</i>
Jan	13	John Rottle	<i>Lost his wife Cindy</i>
Jan	13	Karen Day	<i>Lost her husband Gregory</i>
Jan	14	Audrey Brockhaus	<i>Lost her best friend Alex</i>
Jan	14	Marie Payne	<i>Lost her brother John</i>
Jan	15	David and Kelli Flores	<i>Lost their son Austin</i>
Jan	16	Laurie Carter	<i>Lost her father Jack</i>
Jan	16	Bryan Wilson	<i>Lost his girlfriend Kaylan Rose</i>
Jan	16	Glynn & Denny Waller	<i>Lost their son Nick</i>
Jan	17	Lois Kulijis	<i>Lost her son Joe</i>
Jan	19	Season Martin	<i>Lost her dad William H. Martin</i>
Jan	20	John Stumpf, Jessica & Laura Stumpf	<i>Lost his daughter Keely, lost their sister Keely</i>
Jan	22	Kevin Wildes	<i>Lost his spouse Deborah</i>
Jan	23	Joshua Simon	<i>Lost his father Phil Simon</i>
Jan	25	Patsy Murphy	<i>Lost her brother Pat "Murph"</i>
Jan	26	Joan Chapin	<i>Lost her son Aaron</i>
Jan	26	Shelby Hogarty	<i>Lost her brother Aaron</i>
Jan	28	Sona Etter	<i>Lost her husband John</i>
Jan	28	Kim Bruce, Kellam Holdener	<i>Lost their mother Debbie Holdener</i>
Feb	2	Taren and Gabe Davis	<i>Lost their mom Carrie</i>
Feb	2	Erwin Rokstad	<i>Lost his close friend/ex-wife Carrie</i>
Feb	5	Ray and Roxanne Bulliman	<i>Lost their son Sean</i>
Feb	10	Donn and Debra Irwin	<i>Lost their son Andrew</i>
Feb	12	Rich DeGarmo	<i>Lost his wife Sandi</i>
Feb	13	Lindsey King	<i>Lost her brother Dylan</i>
Feb	17	Crystal Retchless	<i>Lost her twin brother Travis</i>
Feb	17	Alisa German	<i>Lost her husband Rick</i>
Feb	17	Randy Simpson	<i>Lost his wife JoAnn</i>
Feb	18	Dave and Dorothy Pauli	<i>Lost their son Tyler</i>
Feb	19	Shane Cozwith	<i>Lost partner Brad Dale</i>
Feb	19	Kathy Melsness	<i>Lost her daughter Marlene</i>
Feb	20	Ann Mulvey	<i>Lost her husband Jim</i>
Feb	21	Nancy Roach	<i>Lost her husband Robert</i>
Feb	21	Chiane Martin	<i>Lost her father Robert</i>
Feb	21	David Harris	<i>Lost his brother Noel</i>
Feb	22	Valaree Britton	<i>Lost her father Jimmy</i>
Feb	22	Eugene and Mellissa Burgy	<i>Lost brother Paul</i>



Feb	24	Brahim Djouider	<i>Lost his daughter Hanaa</i>
Feb	24	Pat Boggs, Shannon Collazo	<i>Lost her husband Harry, lost her dad Harry</i>
Feb	26	Ann Clark	<i>Lost her husband Bruce</i>
Feb	26	Sally Sangder	<i>Lost her son Matthew</i>
Feb	29	Sherree Gause	<i>Lost her best friend Jamie</i>

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

January birthdays: Riley, Cherise Jonathan, Brent, James, Barry, Mandy, Tyler, Sean, Carleen, Jake, Brent, Justin, Trevor, Chris, Paul, Deborah, Rick, Thomas, Jamie, Marlene, Brian, David, Marisa, Les, Anil, Neal, Carl, Jack, George, Stephanie and Jeff.

February birthdays: Lisa, Mary, Dmitri, Willie, Zachary, Travis, Hanaa, Shawn, Matthew, Don, Sean, Jeff, Bradley, Natasha, Dean, Ed, Jamie, Chuck, Louis, Dolly, Phil, Emily, Benjamin, Trad and Sally.

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 support@auburnsos.com

MEETINGS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY -

The **Auburn** Group meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month. 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.

The **Olympia** Group meets on the third Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Westwood Baptist Church in room E-14, 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. Meetings are held at the Tahoma Indian Center, 1809 E. 31st Street in Tacoma at 7:00 p.m.

For more information or directions please call Colette at 360-490-3454 or coletteaugust@gmail.com.

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

We need your help

Our groups have been in existence for over 30 years. We have been a 501c(3) non profit for 20. At our last board meeting we realized that the average age of our board is 80! That is not sustainable so we are looking to add some new board members. We usually meet once or twice a year.

We are also in need of facilitators; if you would like to help in this way but don't know how – we'll show you! Even if is to be a back up facilitator your experience as a survivor is invaluable.

We could also use some assistance when we have an information table at health fairs and other community events.

And have you ever wanted to improve on this newsletter?! The same person has been doing it for 20 years and is looking to retire!

In order for SOS to continue to be there for you – we would like *you* to be there for SOS! Email us at support@auburnsos.com or call any of the facilitators (numbers above) if you are interested in helping in any way.

Facing the New Year when You are Bereaved

Accepting the New Year

When we are grieving, it is hard enough to live each day as it comes. It can be daunting to face a whole new year stretching out in front of us. We may be afraid of what the new year might bring. We may worry whether or not we can handle any more challenges. Our current experience of emptiness and loneliness may make us reluctant to face a new year.

We might say to ourselves, "I used to be so busy. I used to feel so needed, so useful. Now it seems there's nothing but empty space and empty time." It's bad enough to wake in the morning not sure what we'll do with the day; what will we do with a whole year?

Longing to recover the past can sometimes make us resistance to accepting the new year. The past was where we were comfortable, where we felt safe, felt good. Grief burdens us today and we fear the new year won't hold anything different for us. We pine for the person we miss and the precious past we shared. We think about how it was, and wish we were back there.

Approach of a new year may mean different things for different mourners. Whether we welcome, dread or ignore a new year probably depends on where we are in our grief process. The question is not whether, but how grief will show up, and how we'll work with it.

A Learning Process

If your loss was recent, sudden or unexpected, you might experience it as a shock, as if you're living a bad dream or someone else's life, trying desperately to get back to your "old" life. The last thing on your mind might be the challenge of a new year. Writing or talking repeatedly about the death of your loved one might make you feel numb or detached. Eventually, you might realize that your life is not what you thought it would be, that your world has changed.

Therese Rando, a noted grief therapist and author, describes grieving as a learning process. Each minute with a loved one created patterns of how to operate and what to expect. Each new challenge, like doing the taxes, fixing things, and going into a new year, becomes a fresh occasion to accept the absence of your loved one and find new ways to cope, even if new challenges bring fresh pain.

As you courageously work through your grief over time, you eventually will find the strength to look to the new year with interest and wonder about what it might hold. Maybe you'll feel eager to welcome change, now that your grief has started to ease.

You might find comfort and joy in knowing that you did all that you could and loved well. Enriched by the love you once enjoyed, you can now show deeper compassion for all who suffer. You eventually will recognize life as a gift to enjoy with whomever crosses your path. In time, you might want to do on your own what you both once hoped to accomplish together.

Even if you're scared and lonely, and even if you long for the past, you can still open the door a crack to this new year.

Tips to face the new year

By getting needed rest. If you're still exhausted from caregiving or from acute grieving, focus on physical recovery. Considering talking with your doctor about how to rebuild yourself physically.

Give yourself a mental rest. Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations about yourself, and soothe yourself with music, prayer, uplifting literature, tears and laughter.

Pay attention to hope and desire. Find small practical ways to give yourself new pleasure.

Attend a support group or talk with friends and family members who can list and share memories.

Seek spiritual support from a local minister, rabbi, priest, imam.

Find courage to live into the future by living in the present, one day at a time. Do the best you can to care for yourself and others today.

Afterglow **By Helen Lowrie Marshall**

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.

I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.

I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,

Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.

I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;

Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

*Grief, I've learned, is really just love.
It's all the love you want to give, but
cannot.
All of that unspent love gathers in the
corners of your eyes, the lump in your
throat, and in the hollow part of your
chest.
Grief is just love with no place to go.*

Jamie Anderson

Thank you Jane Hower for passing this on!

Some Tips to Cope With Valentine's Day Grief



Commemorate the memory of your beloved. Love doesn't go away, and we never forget. Nor would we want to. Whether you choose to volunteer for the day at your loved one's favorite charity, visit their gravesite, write them a love letter in your grief journal, share your favorite stories about them with family or friends, or hike to your favorite vista, remembering your beloved with intention on this day is a way to continue the bond you share.

Enjoy an at-home self-care retreat. Crawl under the covers with a cup of chamomile tea and a good book. Immerse yourself in a day-long yoga, meditation, and journaling session. Take the day off, grab your grief journal, order a good meal, and pour your heart out. There is nothing wrong with, and everything right about, giving yourself the self-care you deserve.

Reach out to friends and family. Alone time is good, but if you are withdrawing from the people that support you, Valentine's Day is just as good a time as any to reach back out. Schedule a Zoom call to share photos and memories of your special person with other people who share your grief. If you don't feel like connecting with others, that is fine, just make sure it is a choice rather than a habit.

Order a delicious meal. Many of us are already eating at home, but if you do eat out regularly, know that during the month of February restaurants are full of grief triggers, mostly in the form of hearts and flowers. On Valentine's Day itself you will see couples celebrating, which can be a painful reminder. If you feel that will just cause you suffering, do yourself a favor and either order your favorite meal delivered, or, if you like to cook, prepare it yourself.

Plan for "business as usual." It is totally acceptable to not celebrate Valentine's Day at all. Of course, it is highly unlikely that you will be able to pretend it doesn't exist. Even if you treat it like any other day, don't be surprised if you still have a grief reaction. Know in advance what you can do to tend to strong emotions when they arise. What are your most helpful coping skills? Keep those handy and use them as often as you need!

Cultivate compassion for yourself and others with meditation. While suggesting that you "be your own Valentine" may sound a bit corny, and it won't fill the void left when a loved one dies, compassion meditation practice, known as metta meditation, can go a long way to help you feel more connected to yourself and the world at large. You can reframe the message of Valentine's Day from one of romantic love to a universal love of all sentient beings: animals, spiritual leaders, friends, family, strangers, yourself, and even those pesky difficult people.

Show yourself kindness and mercy. You will no doubt be bombarded by images and soundbites of Valentine's Day between now and Feb. 14. Offset the suffering you feel by practicing self-compassion as self-care. Send yourself words of self-compassion and mercy: "This is hard, but I am doing my best," "May I be free from my suffering, and surrounded by love," or "I feel this sadness because I love deeply. I would not trade that for anything." My mindfulness-based meditation for grief and sadness is a useful tool for tending to difficult emotions.

No matter how you wind up spending Valentine's Day, please be kind to yourself. Your grieving heart deserves it.

"Hearts are breakable," Isabelle said. "And I think even when you heal, you're never what you were before"."

SUICIDE LOSS SURVIVOR'S BILL OF RIGHTS

I have the right to be free of guilt.

I have the right not to feel responsible for the suicide death.

I have the right to express my feelings and emotions, even if they do not seem acceptable,
as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

I have the right to have my questions answered honestly by authorities and family members.

I have the right not to be deceived because others feel they can spare me further grief.

I have the right to maintain a sense of hopefulness.

I have the right to peace and dignity.

I have the right to positive feelings about the one I lost through suicide
regardless of the events prior to or at the time of the untimely death.

I have the right to retain my individuality and not be judged because of the suicide death.

I have the right to seek counseling and a support group to enable me to honestly
explore my feelings to further the acceptance process.

I have the right to reach acceptance.

I have the right to a new beginning.

I have the right to be.

JOANN C. MECCA, CENTER FOR INNER GROWTH AND WHOLENESS, WETHERSFIELD, CT

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

Return Service Requested

*Non profit Org
US Postage Paid
Federal Way, WA
Permit #58*



You can find Auburn SOS on Facebook. Go to Facebook and type 'Auburn SOS' in the search box or go to our website and follow the link on the first page.

Happy New Year!



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.

Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion.

~ Buddha

