



# SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE

## King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups



### JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Website: [www.auburnsos.com](http://www.auburnsos.com)

e-mail: [support@auburnsos.com](mailto: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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 thanks to Gary Woempner for a love gift in memory of his son Asa*

*Many thanks also to Dana Curtis and Paul Stroeder for a love gift in memory of Dan Nordgren.*

*Without your help we could not do what we do!*

*An easy way to give is to connect your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Auburn SOS!!*

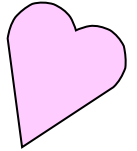
#### **IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE:**

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!

Heidi Smith	253-381-8717	Lost son	Kathy Melsness	253-446-6500	Lost daughter
Andee Church	253-820-1911	Lost brother	Pam Driggers	253-921-7829	Lost husband
			Kathy Crowley	253-471-9412	Lost son
José Martin	206-228-7413	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	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	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	24	Patience Darrah	<i>Lost her son Taylor</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	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	25	Kathy Cooper	<i>Lost her son Brandon</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, 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, Andrew, Pepper and Sally.**

We strive for accuracy. If we are missing the name of your loved one or if the information is incorrect or missing please let us know so we can correct it! Send an e-mail to [newsletter@auburnsos.com](mailto:newsletter@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 Heidi at 253-381-8717.

The **Tacoma** Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month. Meetings are held at the Tahoma Indian Center, 621 Tacoma Ave S., #505 at 6:00 p.m.

For more information or directions please call Colette at 360-490-3454 or [coletteaugust@gmail.com](mailto:coletteaugust@gmail.com).

There is no fee to attend any of these groups. For more information send an e-mail to [support@auburnsos.com](mailto:support@auburnsos.com)

We are very grateful that Heidi was willing to step up and fill in for Janis facilitating the Olympia Group. Janis continues to heal and we all wish her the best.

### **What People Think We Grieve**

~ The loved ones that we lost

What We Actually Grieve

~All of the missed moments

The memories we can no longer make

The empty chairs at the dinner table

The conversations that can no longer be had

All of the happy moments we want to share

The sad times we need their support

Our life before they died

All of the future plans we made

## **A Note to All**

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 and our treasurer is 90! That is not sustainable so we are looking to add some new board members. We usually meet once or twice a year.

### **From your Catherine North, Board President and Newsletter Editor:**

I lost my brother John to suicide in 2000. I felt so fortunate to find a group that understood what I was going through and helped me to heal. In 2004 I was instrumental in us becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit. Approximately half of our donations come as a result of that. It is because of our non-profit status that we are required to have board members and regular board meetings.

I would like to see Auburn SOS be there for all those people in the future like it was for me. This isn't going to happen unless we get some help! The same people are continuing to do the work and they are aging, as mentioned above, our treasurer is 90! You have had the same newsletter editor since 2004. There are a multitude of ways to help: come to a meeting to support the new people coming in, attend a board meeting, suggest an article for the newsletter, send in poems or stories for the newsletter, offer to take over the newsletter, offer to help manage our Facebook page, offer to help with our website, offer to answer our email, provide assistance when we have an information table at health fairs and other community events. Most of these do not require a lot of skill but simply a willingness to see our group go on.

### **A note from Ben Roller, facilitator of Auburn SOS:**

August 10, 2016 my 23-year-old daughter chose to end her pain and this event has forever changed my family's lives. We attended the August meeting, a broken mess that persisted for some time. Had it not been for the members sharing their stories, caring for us, I am not sure how we'd faired. We now are able to help others and maintain our peace by walking through this with you. COVID impacted our groups attendance and few members with 2+ years attend regularly. We do our best to attend to the needs of new members, but my fear is that we fall short of the care we received when we were looking for hope. I have come to know the aging members of our SOS board attending the last 2 bi-yearly meetings. The board does the work to keep our non-profit status and support our groups. We need to prepare for the day when theses good people want to retire. Here are my asks: - Take care of yourself, I'm concerned if you are not doing the necessary self-care. - Help us keep our meetings going, show up and lets all benefit from well-attended meetings. - Consider facilitating meetings. Please do not assume these meetings will continue without greater participation.

### **From Pam Driggers, former facilitator of Auburn SOS;**

In March of 2008 I lost my husband and father of our four children to suicide The next couple of years are a blur. In February of 2011 our oldest son contacted the family to tell us about this group he had found and asked if we would go with him for support.

After attending several meetings and listening to others share I realized I had been numb for a while and was thankful for this group. I continued attending and in December of 2013 I spoke at a Grief thru the Holidays event. I started facilitating the group in 2015. At that time we had been meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. I was only able to commit to one day a month. We reached out but sadly we were not able to fill our second meeting. I am very grateful for Ben stepping in and helping with our meetings. Hearing that our group is one of the only places some members are able to share is what has kept me committed to being here. I'm hopeful we can grow this incredible group and be here in the future.

*“What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.” Aristotle*

*This year I resolve to:*

*Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my lifetime whether they are physically present or not.*

*Tell their stories, the happy and the sad, they will live on through me.*

*Encourage others to share memories.*

*Teach others that they cannot "make" me cry, tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.*

*Understand that others will not understand my pain and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.*

*Understand that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy and normal. "Doing well" means expressing my feelings.*

*Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is a real gift that we give to them.*

*Help others; reaching out to others in pain will help me to heal.*

*Do something nice for myself everyday.*

*Know that if today I cannot do everything that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.*

*Cry when I need to, laugh when I can and to not feel guilty about either one.*

*Let go, bit-by-bit, of the guilt, regret and anger because I know holding on to these emotions can be so damaging.*

*Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.*

*Take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual health.*

*Reinvest in life a little bit each day...*

*By Tanya Lord*

## *Other Resources*

### **Widowed Information and Consultation Services**

The purpose of WICS is to provide a supportive environment to widowed people. WICS operates on volunteered time and donations from the community.

When: Monday- 2:00 pm

Where: Auburn Senior Activity Center, 808 Ninth Street SE, Auburn, WA 98002

Contact: 206- 241-5650

### **Grief Support Group**

When: 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month (excluding holidays), 10-11:30 am.

Where: Lacey Presbyterian Church, 3045 Carpenter Road SE, Lacey

Contact: 360-493-4667 or (800)869-7062 (Providence Sound Homecare & Hospice)

### **The Compassionate Friends, Olympia**

What: Loss of Child Support Group

When: First Monday of every month, 7-8:30 p.m.

Where: Providence St. Peter Hospital (Executive Meeting Room), 413 Lily Road NE, Olympia

Contact: 360-402-6711 (Providence SoundHomeCare & Hospice)

### **The Compassionate Friends, Kent**

When: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Where: Saint Columba's Episcopal Church, 26715 Military Rd, South Kent, 98032

Contact: Michael 206-369-7366

**BRIDGES: A Center for Grieving Children** is a family-based support program where families with children ages 4-18 who have experienced the death of a parent or a sibling come together to heal. We offer support groups just for children as well as groups for adults.

When: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of every month 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Where: Christ Church, 310 North K St, Tacoma, WA 98403

Who: Surviving families of suicide who have children between the ages of 4-18

Contact: Matt 253-403-1966 for more information

### **Griefshare – Federal Way**

Faith based grief support group. Nominal fee includes workbook.

When: Wednesdays, 12-2pm

Where: St Luke's Lutheran Church, 515 S. 312th St., Federal Way, WA 98003

Who: this group is not specific to suicide loss

Contact: Alice Phillips, 253-941-3000

***"You Don't Just Lose Someone Once"***

You lose them over and over, sometimes many times a day.  
When the loss, momentarily forgotten,  
creeps up, and attacks you from behind.  
Fresh waves of grief as the realization hits home, they are gone.  
Again.

You don't just lose someone once,  
you lose them every time you open your eyes to a new dawn,  
and as you awaken,  
so does your memory,  
so does the jolting bolt of lightning that rips into your heart,  
they are gone.  
Again.

Losing someone is a journey, not a one-off.  
There is no end to the loss, there is only a learned skill on how to stay afloat, when it washes over.  
Be kind to those who are sailing this stormy sea, they have a journey ahead of them,  
and a daily shock to the system each time they realize, they are gone,  
Again.

You don't just lose someone once,  
you lose them every day, for a lifetime.

Author unknown  
from the book "Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul".

*Donations are always appreciated and are tax deductible*



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

Please mail your donations to:

28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S., Federal Way, WA. 98003

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

Auburn SOS  
28824 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S.  
Federal Way, WA 98003

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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.



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