



**SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE**  
**King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups**  
**MAY/JUNE, 2019**  
**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!

Thank you to the Whipple family for a donation in memory of Lance Alan Whipple.  
 Thanks also to Kathy Melsness for a love gift in memory of her daughter Marlene.

We also received donations from the Washington Combined Fund Drive, Network for Good, the Benevity Community Impact Fund and our Fred Meyer quarterly donation (don't forget to sign up with them!)

**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

Call José if you would like to speak to another survivor in Spanish.  
 Me gustaria ayudar a la gente que necesite hablar espanol

Thinking of You Especially:

May	1	Ann Good	<i>Lost her older brother Brian</i>
May	1	Jane Jenks	<i>Lost her son Matthew</i>
May	1	Caralin Coffey	<i>Lost her son Robbie</i>
May	4	Cecilia Icenogle	<i>Lost her son Paul</i>
May	4	Misty Elledge	<i>Lost her husband Jake</i>
May	5	Stasi Abramson	<i>Lost her husband Neal</i>
May	5	Becky Fralick	<i>Lost her husband Clifford</i>
May	5	Kathy & Steven Gus	<i>Lost daughter Sally</i>
May	7	Lane Lindberg	<i>Lost her husband Tim</i>
May	9	David Shepherd	<i>Lost his wife Tina</i>
May	9	Cindy Brooks	<i>Lost her brother Barry</i>
May	11	Dorothy Joan Ritchie	<i>Lost her son Shawn</i>
May	11	Karen Curnow	<i>Lost her husband Don</i>
May	11	Linda Bowen, Kristy Vardon	<i>Lost their friend Don</i>
May	12	Jamie Clair	<i>Lost best friend Antonio Morales</i>
May	12	Lindy Nagle	<i>Lost her brother Les</i>
May	13	Tom Fender	<i>Lost his wife Kathy</i>
May	13	Tristan Marshall	<i>Lost her husband Matt</i>
May	14	Linda Morris	<i>Lost her son Andrew</i>
May	15	Cindy Williams	<i>Lost her son Kolby</i>
May	17	Connie Horton	<i>Lost her brother Steve</i>
May	17	Kristina Stokes, Kristin Bennett	<i>Lost her father, grandfather Gary Bennett</i>
May	20	Kelly Molano	<i>Lost her husband Alex</i>
May	20	Colleen Zevenbergen	<i>Lost her fiancé David</i>
May	21	Jody Campbell	<i>Lost her son Justin</i>
May	21	Debbie Endsley	<i>Lost her nephew Justin Campbell</i>
May	21	Bernadette Fong	<i>Lost her friend Kalani Whitney</i>
May	23	Ruth Conway, Stefanie Freeman	<i>Lost her son Asa, her brother Asa</i>
May	23	Linda Sabado	<i>Lost her daughter Victrina</i>
May	23	Gary Woempner	<i>Lost his son Asa</i>
May	23	Diane Lindfors	<i>Lost her husband John</i>
May	25	Joan Helbacka	<i>Lost her father-in-law Ray</i>
May	27	Russell Munden	<i>Lost his brother Bradley</i>
May	28	Sandra Christian	<i>Lost her son Thomas</i>
May	29	Janet Miller	<i>Lost her boyfriend Ken</i>
May	29	Karrie Myton	<i>Lost her mother Sydney</i>
May	31	Ruth-Ann	<i>Lost her brother Jeremiah</i>
June	1	Iysha Matthews	<i>Lost her brother Jordan</i>
June	2	Shannon Whitemarsh	<i>Lost her husband Bryan</i>
June	2	Mike Brennan	<i>Lost his wife Molly</i>
June	3	Diane Brown	<i>Lost her brother Don</i>
June	3	Bonnie Palin, Venita Cook	<i>Lost her son Jadon, her grandson Jadon</i>
June	6	Kara Olson	<i>Lost ex-husband James</i>
June	6	Rob Waldron	<i>Lost his partner Bill</i>
June	8	Heidi Sanders	<i>Lost her husband Kevin</i>
June	9	Joan Helbacka	<i>Lost her brother-in-law Don</i>
June	10	Nancy Ekdahl	<i>Lost her brother John</i>
June	10	Judy Kester	<i>Lost her brother Ed</i>
June	11	Ralph & Darlene Elliott	<i>Lost their son Randee</i>
June	12	Sue Ray	<i>Lost her brother Robert</i>
June	12	Cherie Nordgren	<i>Lost her husband Dan</i>
June	14	Courtney Deel	<i>Lost her s/o John</i>
June	14	Colette August	<i>Lost her mom Lana Buffington</i>
June	14	Lavina Crosby	<i>Lost her Aunt Lana</i>
June	15	Jan Lumsden	<i>Lost her brother</i>
June	16	Brad & Susan Hicks	<i>Lost son James</i>
June	17	Sarah Rapacz	<i>Lost her brother Jeff</i>

June	17	Jo Gunn	<i>Lost her son Jeffrey</i>
June	18	Catherine Masucci	<i>Lost her brother Fred</i>
June	18	Joni & Lino Nordland	<i>Lost daughter's boyfriend Walker</i>
June	19	Katie Bukata, Kimmie Hummel	<i>Lost their best friend Jenna</i>
June	21	Julie Healy	<i>Lost her daughter Kristin</i>
June	22	Jamie Buccieri	<i>Lost mom Jodi</i>
June	22	Carrie Harper & Dennis Kitzmiller	<i>Lost their son Jeffrey</i>
June	22	Brynn and Myrv Rutherford	<i>Lost their son Kellen</i>
June	23	Greg and Faye Brown	<i>Lost their daughter Candice</i>
June	24	Joy Kinzer	<i>Lost her fiancé Shawn Bertsch</i>
June	25	Janis Fesenmaier	<i>Lost her brother Paul</i>
June	26	Cindi Wilson	<i>Lost her son Jacob</i>
June	26	Karin Gehrke	<i>Lost her nephew Jacob</i>
June	28	Linda and Kelly Keough	<i>Lost son Derek</i>
June	30	Deb Boulton	<i>Lost her husband Mark</i>
June	30	Jennifer Chapline	<i>Lost cousin Carleen</i>
June	?	Aaron Hendrickson	<i>Lost his friend Marc</i>

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

**May Birthdays:** *Jim, Jacob, Phil, Matt, Rachel, Sean, Eric, Paul, Elena, Jason, Art, Alan, Roice, Jeffrey, Marshall, Robert, William, Thomas, James, Tyler, Tina, Scott, Vikki, Erik, and Jodi.*

**June Birthdays:** *Jerry, Erick, Angela, Jacsha, Chester, Jason, Joshua, Derek, Terry, Sean, Matthew, Chris, Garrett, John, Jerry, Thomas, Paul, Carol, John, Keith, Andrew, Angel, Austin and John.*

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](mailto:newsletter@auburnsos.com)

### **MEETINGS FOR MAY AND JUNE:**

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-10, located at 333 Kaiser Road in Olympia from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

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

The **Puyallup** Group meets the third Monday of every month. Meetings are held at the First Christian Church of Puyallup located at 623 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information contact Erin Wesen at 253-973-0492 or [erinmaries@hotmail.com](mailto:erinmaries@hotmail.com)

The **Lewis** County Group in Centralia is on hold for the time being.

For more information contact Kristi Biggers at 360-703-7500.

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)



today words escape me  
I am sad beyond them  
my world will pause today  
and I will ache  
my soul cries out every fiber of my being

longs for just one more touch  
just one more hug  
one more kiss from my father.  
my heart breaks.  
I miss him.



A few days ago, we reached out to our readers and asked for their help writing a post in anticipation of Mother's Day. Specifically, we asked mothers grieving the death of a child to share one thing they want people to know about their grief on Mother's Day. Our intent was to create a list of responses.

We received comments and messages from close to one hundred different women. Although their collective wisdom is the result of a diverse range of experiences, there is a synchronicity to their words that made us feel they belonged together in one cohesive whole.

So, instead of presenting you with a choppy and disjointed list, we've taken many of the responses we received and put them together in a letter. This letter is not written by one bereaved mother, but an entire chorus of mothers. Their words are not at all the same, but their message blends together to create a mournful, harmonious, and beautiful song.

We tried our best to provide the glue that holds these words together, but we probably have not done the collective conversation justice.

Dear Friend,

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense *"love"*. It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother's love for her child doesn't require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to *"get better"* or return to *"normal."* However, I actually *am* normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.

My grief is like the weather. Somedays it's calm, quiet, maybe even a little sunny. Other days it's a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – *"Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?"* This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother's Day, all I can say that it depends. Of course, I'm going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you're hoping that your Mother's Day picnic doesn't get spoiled by actual rain, I'll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with them. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my best friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am a mother to a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or how they're liking piano lessons, or whether they've chosen a major in college. In my mind, I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, knowing they didn't get the opportunity to experience these special days.

Most people don't know how to validate my child's place in the world or my ongoing role as my child's mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Heck, sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like *"Do you have children?"* and *"How many?"* I know many bereaved mothers, like me, long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their *only* child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all in broader society. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say “*What blood?*” “*What knife?*”

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – “*Don’t forget, you’re lucky to have other children.*” Please let me assure you, a mother does not forget *any* of her children. This mother loves each and every one of her unique and special children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided, and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments, because it’s difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

All that said, you asked me what it’s like to grieve a child on Mother’s Day, so here’s what I have to say:

This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

Beyond that, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child and I constantly feel like the elephant in the room, but it doesn’t have to be this way. Honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name spoken out loud! I love hearing stories about them. Maybe you know a story I’ve never heard, or maybe I’ve heard it a hundred times before, but it really doesn’t matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is one of the greatest Mother’s Day gifts you could give me.

I guess while I’m offering my two cents, I also have something to say to my fellow bereaved mothers. No one has it all figured out, but I’ve learned a few lessons along the way. If you’re worried about Mother’s Day, you’re not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. You may want to plan a whole day of activities just to stay busy, or you may feel like doing nothing at all. There is no “right” way to handle Mother’s Day – but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day and, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love and support you.

Whatever you do, believe you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay and have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve and celebrate on Mother’s Day all at the same time.

Let’s take care of each other,

M

Used with permission



“You will lose someone you can’t live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn’t seal back up. And you come through. It’s like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.”

– Anne Lamott



**San Francisco**  
June 8, 2019

**Boston**  
June 22, 2019

## Register for the 2019 Overnight

As soon as you register for the Overnight, we'll give you all the tools you need to reach your fundraising goal including your own personal webpage. Walk with thousands from dusk til dawn to fight suicide. The Overnight is an experience like no other.

Once a year, thousands join together to walk through the night to fight suicide. The connections people make last a lifetime, and the funds you raise will save lives.

You'll feel safe and cared-for in a community where everyone supports each other. It's a place to laugh, to cry, and to heal—to honor the past and embrace the future that your work will change for the better.

### About AFSP

We are the leader in the fight against suicide. We fund research, advocate, create educational programs, and support survivors of suicide loss.

### The Experience

As you walk over 16 miles through the night, you'll feel safe and cared-for in a community where everyone supports each other.

### Why We Walk

Every year suicide claims more lives than war, murder, and natural disasters combined. It's up to us to put a stop to this tragic loss of life.



**When:** June 8, 2019

**Location:** Marina Park, Kirkland

**Contact:** Krystal Marx, (206) 783-4288, [kmarx@namiwa.org](mailto:kmarx@namiwa.org)

Join us for this easy 5k walk. Check in is 8:00 am., walk starts at 9:00 am

In 2019, we are celebrating 17 years of NAMIWalks, the nation's largest mental health awareness and fundraising event. We invite you to join us for any of our close to 100 community walks. NAMIWalks is a fun, family-friendly event and there is no cost to register.

There are multiple ways you can make a difference with NAMIWalks: as a sponsor, committee member, team captain, team member, individual walker, or volunteer!

However you participate in NAMIWalks, you will be joining NAMI's movement to raise awareness of mental illness and raise funds for our mission to help individuals and families right here in our region.

Register today and join us as we improve lives and our communities one step at a time.

***As we have every year – Auburn SOS will have a table at the walk, stop by and say hello!***

## SHIFTING THE SUN

When your father dies, say the Irish  
you lose your umbrella against bad  
weather.  
May his sun be your light, say the  
Armenians.

When your father dies, say the Welsh  
you sink a foot deeper into the earth.  
May you inherit his light, say the Armenians

When your father dies, say the Canadians  
you run out of excuses.  
May you inherit his sun, say the Armenians.

When your father dies, say the Indians  
he comes back as the thunder.  
May you inherit his light, say the  
Armenians.

When your father dies, say the Russians,  
he takes your childhood with him.  
May you inherit his light say the Armenians.

When your father dies, say the British,  
you join his club you vowed you wouldn't.  
May you inherit his sun, say the Armenians.

When your father dies, say the Armenians,  
your sun shifts forever  
and you walk in his light.

By Diana Der-Hovanessian, 1934-2018



Coming next time – some creative ways people  
have use to memorialize their loved one

*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

Return Service Requested



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.

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### *We Are Still Mothers*

We are still mothers  
With empty arms and broken hearts  
We are still mothers  
With beautiful memories and broken dreams  
We are still mothers  
With questions and no answers  
We are still mothers  
Slapped by reality every moment of the day  
We are still mothers  
Who ache for the future of our children  
Although they're gone  
We are still mothers

Outraged that life goes on around us  
Without our children  
We are still mothers  
Wondering how the sun shines so brightly,  
Without the lights of our children  
We are still mothers  
Searching for purpose in ourselves and  
Finding only more questions  
We are still mothers  
Who lost the loves of our lives and  
Yet must still go on  
We are still mothers  
With empty arms and broken hearts