



**SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE**  
**King/ Pierce/ Thurston County Support Groups**  
**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2021**  
**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.**

*Many thanks to Jane Hower in memory of her son Wes.*

*We also received a donation from the Washington Combined Fund Drive*

*We received our quarterly donation from Fred Meyer, if you haven't already linked your rewards card to us, please do so!!*

**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			

Thinking of You Especially:

September	1	Brad Knowles	<i>Lost his brother Greg</i>
September	3	Lia and Jesse Good	<i>Lost their son Mike</i>
September	4	Rashanna Smith	<i>Lost her daughter April</i>
September	4	Mickie Kasalek	<i>Lost her son James Otto</i>
September	5	Jean M. Winburn	<i>Lost her daughter Katie</i>
September	9	Karen Khela	<i>Lost her son Jeremy</i>
September	10	Nancy Leonetti	<i>Lost her son Kip</i>
September	10	Chineka Williams	<i>Lost her dad Willie C. Jones</i>
September	10	Sheila and Ira Benton Sr.	<i>Lost their son Ira</i>
September	10	Tina Tomyn	<i>Lost her brother Ira</i>
September	12	Mary E. Bremen	<i>Lost her nephew Shane Bremen</i>
September	13	Gay Wood	<i>Lost her son Aaron</i>
September	13	Jane Hughes	<i>Lost her daughter Danielle</i>
September	14	Lynn and Ken Weatherill	<i>Lost their son Scott</i>
September	16	Michelle Potwin	<i>Lost her mother Erros</i>
September	16	Amanda Ruston	<i>Lost her sister Jenifer Bollinger</i>
September	17	Christopher Ramb	<i>Lost his son Thomas</i>
September	18	Kathleen Taylor	<i>Lost her husband Art</i>
September	21	Debbie James	<i>Lost her son Anthony</i>
September	22	Joann Deuel	<i>Lost her grandson James</i>
September	22	Josephine Geiger	<i>Lost her husband Rich</i>
September	22	Hillary Kinsley	<i>Lost her brother Jackson</i>
September	22	Angela Kores	<i>Lost her hubby Ricky Wilson</i>
September	22	Sherri Cora	<i>Lost her son Tristen</i>
September	24	Alethia Michels	<i>Lost her father Theodore</i>
September	24	Elaine and Rocky Ruvalcaba	<i>Lost son of dear friend Anil</i>
September	25	Debbie Jiron	<i>Lost her son Devin</i>
September	25	Bette Rutledge	<i>Lost her husband James</i>
September	27	Hope Slayton	<i>Lost her husband Jonathan</i>
September	28	Diane DeGooyer-Harmon	<i>Lost her daughter Marnie</i>
September	28	Diane Hardwick-Smith	<i>Lost her son Kurt</i>
September	28	Felipa Galaviz	<i>Lost her grandson Austin Kyle</i>
September	28	Patty Bickley	<i>Lost her son David</i>
September	28	Darlene Stephenson	<i>Lost her daughter-in-law Catherine McCandless</i>
September	30	Dot Helgason	<i>Lost her son Trad</i>
October	1	Debbie and Henry Izumizaki	<i>Lost their son James</i>
October	1	Gloria Jackson-Nefertiti	<i>Lost her brother Kevin</i>
October	3	Christie Harris	<i>Lost her son-in-law Louis</i>
October	4	Mark Hinkelman	<i>Lost his son Thomas</i>
October	4	Lyman Burk	<i>Lost his son Palmer</i>
October	5	Michelle Langrehr	<i>Lost her husband Keith</i>
October	6	Angieline Evarts	<i>Lost her spouse Derek</i>
October	6	Dede Henley Norris	<i>Lost her daughter Carly Danielle</i>
October	7	Shannon Hansen	<i>Lost her sister-in-law Allison</i>
October	7	Celia Gail Jackson	<i>Lost her husband Jeffrey Lehman Jackson</i>
October	9	Bonnie and Marc Jones	<i>Lost her brother Craig</i>
October	14	Karen Paup	<i>Lost her husband Richard</i>
October	15	Catherine Petrich	<i>Lost her sister Susan Emmerson</i>
October	15	Donna Lee	<i>Lost her son Jeff Leahy</i>
October	15	John and Loretia Cornette	<i>Lost their son Justin</i>
October	17	Jose and Amalia Martin	<i>Lost their son Cesar</i>
October	19	Donna Brawley	<i>Lost her nephew Roy Miller</i>
October	18	Jean Luce	<i>Lost her niece Riley</i>
October	21	Ken Nordstrom	<i>Lost his son Jascha</i>
October	23	Jena Rucks	<i>Lost her dad Terry</i>
October	24	Troy DiBenedetto	<i>Lost his wife Kelli</i>
October	28	Cindi Squance	<i>Lost her son Ryan</i>
October	28	Helen Arnold and Lisa Bailey	<i>Lost their mother Marie Steward</i>
October	28	Ron and Pam Puckett	<i>Lost their son Stephen Lee Puckett</i>
October	28	Susan Tusa	<i>Lost her brother John Wm. Tusa, Jr</i>

October 28 Sylvia Sizer  
October 30 Kim and Paul Hulzebos

*Lost son of a friend Ryan Squance  
Lost their son Paul Jason*

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

**September birthdays:** Brian, Bruce, Craig, Jordan, Tammy, Brien, Mike, Kara, Josh, David, Theodore, Joe, Kalani, Alex, Scott, Vanessa, Jacob, Arthur, Katie, Jeremy, Catherine, Aaron, Kathy, Tim, and Tristan.

**October birthdays:** Brandon, Stephen, Cornina, Jeff, Matt, Rick, Jenna, Timm, James, Brigitte, Jamey, Baxter, Andrew, Craig, Sydney, Raul, Travis, James, Rachel, Brenda, Paul, James, Richard, Nick and Taylor.

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 SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER - please note the changes!**

***Zoom Meetings! –***

Until the pandemic and the lockdowns are over we all need to stay safe! Since we cannot meet in person we will be hosting Zoom meetings at the regular meetings times:

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 6 pm for the Tacoma Group

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7 pm for the Olympia Group and

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 7 pm for the Auburn Group

Go to our Facebook page to find the meeting, the **password is ‘Auburn’**.

Don’t have Zoom? Download it for free at Zoom.com. The link to the meeting is on our Facebook page – or ask and we can email it to you if you aren’t on Facebook. Please join us!

**When things are back to ‘normal’ – this is when and where we meet:**

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 **Tacoma** Group meets on the second Wednesday of every month. Meetings are held at the TACID Building, Room 2, the address is 6315 S. 19<sup>th</sup>, Tacoma 98466, from 6:00 to 8:00 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 hope to start meeting in person again by early fall! It will be posted on our website and our Facebook page when it happens

We don’t move on from loved ones we’ve lost. We move forward with them always in our hearts, all around us, in who we are, and in all that we do in life.

Mona Lee

I painted my toenails purple, your favorite color. I packed the heart that holds some of your ashes. I am wearing your necklace with your name on it, and your socks with the Hibiscus flower on the ankle. All this to memorialize you on the worst day of my life. The day you took your life.

Your Dad, Sister and I are at the Ocean camping. The place where we camped with you many times. We don't like to be home where we heard the news. We tried that the first year and friends gathered around us trying to make it a happy day, but that day will never be happy for us. We find the ocean healing. I get so angry sometimes because I don't want to paint my toes alone, I want to paint them with you. I want you to wear your necklace and socks. I definitely don't want your ashes, I want you. I can't believe it has been 5 years.

Jess, I miss your laughter and smile that I now can only capture in past photos. I miss your humor, your eye for decorating and your companionship. I miss watching people react to your wit and charm. I loved being a part of watching the compassion and patience you showed to animals and children. You have missed so much.



*Jess and her mom Diana*

Today started out very windy at the ocean. As we sat there, we all shared what we missed about you. I created a facebook post with our words ending with how we miss your selfies. Then I posted one of your last selfies and added a selfie of each of us. For one quick moment on facebook, I felt like we were a family of four again. Then knowing that you loved arts and crafts and always engaged with children at gatherings, we made candy leis. We spent all afternoon working on them. Dad had ribbon cutting duty and your sister and I assembled them. Of course they were purple.

After a few hours we lined our arms with hanging leis and proceeded to look for children at the campground. Dad wanted me to tell people why. So I started by telling the parents that we made these leis in memory of my daughter who died 5 years ago. Then I asked for their permission to give one to their children. No one turned them down. We met many families and they all gave us their condolences. There were a few families that touched our hearts. The first family had 3 girls. After we hung the leis around their necks they kept thanking us and telling us how beautiful they are. That made me think, *Yes she is beautiful.* Then we found a boy with a t-shirt on that said, "Grandpa's Little Buddy." He was wiping away his tears because he had just fallen and the lei cheered him up. Another lady with a little girl said she would think of you all day. Then there was a man that was walking fast away from me because he thought I was selling something. He slowed down after he started listening to what I was saying. He had two daughters. We gave one lei to the older girl but the little girl was crying from a fall and was not ready to shake it off. The older sister assured me she would share with her little sister. That reminded me of you and your sister's love for each other. The last family had 3 girls. After I handed the leis out the mom asked me if purple was your favorite color. She noticed!

After we delivered all the leis and headed back to camp, I read some bible verses on loss and we prayed. Something we seldom do. The words were comforting and thought provoking. After everyone went to sleep I sat in silence reflecting on the day with feelings of contentment from creating the leis and distributing them. I felt loved reading all the facebook comments and likes. Then unplanned, I started reading our old text feed which made me smile and laugh. It was a more upbeat day of remembering you. It is how we get through August 10th now. There is just one more thing I want you to know. I love you Jessica from here to the moon and back a quadrillion times!

**Diana lost her daughter Jess to suicide. Her husband, Ben, is the facilitator of the Auburn Group**

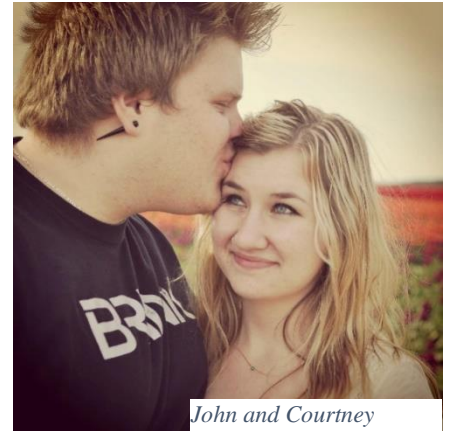
“In 2014 I lost my boyfriend John to suicide. Suicide is a complicated grief, and for years it defined me - it became my identity. I carried the pain daily and sank into a deeper depression myself. When the weight of the grief was too much, I found relief in writing. We are survivors of a misplaced burden, and the only way out is through.”



### **Band-aids**

A grieving heart  
is unlike  
any heart  
I've known.  
pieced together  
by memories  
like bandages  
whose adhesive  
can no longer  
hold.

From the book, *Clockwork*  
(available online and wherever books are sold)



*John and Courtney*

**Courtney Deel is a member of the Auburn SOS group.**

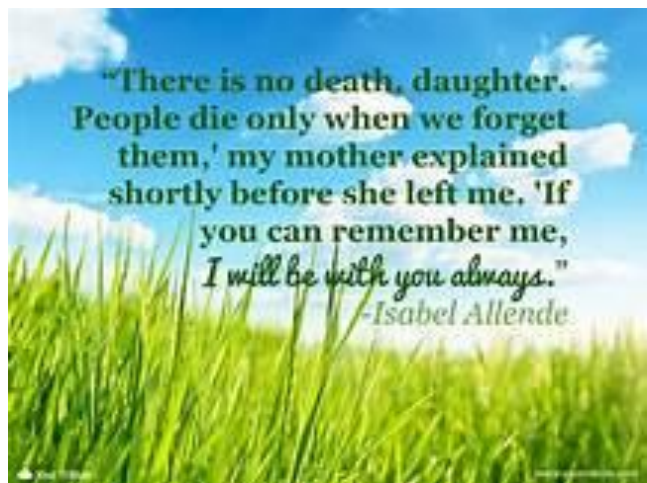
Colette August, Tacoma SOS group facilitator attended the Federal Way Kiwanis group as a guest speaker the end of July. She shared information about her own story of losing her mother, Lana Buffington, a Registered Nurse, at 13 years old to suicide. She shared how talking about that grief is helping others in their grief about the virtual support groups offered to survivors of suicide and how it's helped her work through feelings of guilt. She also talked about her own experiences seeing the connections of suicide and substance abuse. Though the group was small (due to covid), they were attentive.

Her mother died of a drug overdose.

August 31 is International Overdose awareness day. She held an event to remember her Mother, Lana Buffington, Father, John August, and younger brother Chris August.



*Colette and her parents, John and Lana*



## Dealing With Grieving Students in Your Class

The following steps help support the grieving students as well as prepare your class for making the grieving student feel comfortable and supported

### 1. Talk with the grieving student before they return

Ask what they want the class to know about the death, funeral arrangements, etc. If possible, call the family prior to the student's return to school so that you can let the student know you are thinking of them and want to help make their return to school as supportive as possible.

### 2. Talk to your class about how grief affects people and encourage them to share how they feel.

One way to do this is to discuss what other types of losses or deaths the students in your class have experienced, and what type of support they found helpful and unhelpful.

### 3. Discuss how difficult it may be for their classmate to return to school, and how they can help.

You can ask your class for ideas about how they would like others to treat them if they were returning to school after a death, pointing out differences in preferences. Some students might like to be left alone while others want the circumstances discussed freely. Most grieving students say that they want everyone to treat them the same way they treated them before and don't want people to be "extra nice." While students usually say they don't want to be in the spotlight, they also don't want people acting like nothing happened.

### 4. Provide a way for your class to reach out to the grieving classmate and their family.

One of the ways that students can reach out is by sending cards or pictures to their classmate and family, letting them know the class is thinking of them. If students in your class knew the person who died, they could share memories of that person.

### 5. Provide flexibility and support to the grieving student when they return to class.

Recognize that your student will have difficulty concentrating and focusing on school work. Make a plan for them to be able to leave the classroom if they need additional support throughout the school day. This could include talking with a counselor, favorite teacher, or having time to check in with their family.

## Dos and Don'ts with Grieving Students

**DO** listen. Grieving students need a safe, trusted adult who will listen to them

**DO** follow routines. Routines provide a sense of safety for grieving students.

**DO** set limits. Just because students are grieving, doesn't mean that the rules do not apply. When grieving, students may experience lapses in concentration or exhibit risk taking behavior. Setting clear limits provides a more secure and safe environment for everyone under these circumstances.

**DO NOT** suggest that the student has grieved long enough.

**DO NOT** indicate that the student should get over it and move on.

Dougy Center  
The National Grief Center for Children & Families

*The strongest person in the world is a grieving mother that wakes up and keeps going every morning.*

Tara Watkins Anderson

## Save Lives and Bring Hope

Many people's introduction to AFSP comes through the Out of the Darkness Walks, taking place in cities nationwide. In our Community, Campus and Overnight Walks, those affected by suicide – and those who support them – raise awareness and much-needed funds, strongly sending the message that suicide is preventable, and that no one is alone.

The Community Walks, held in hundreds of cities across the country, are the core of the Out of the Darkness movement, which began in 2004. These events give people the courage to open up about their own connections to the cause, and a platform to create a culture that's smarter about mental health. Friends, family members, neighbors and coworkers walk side-by-side, supporting each other and in memory of those we've lost.

We're moving forward with plans to host our Out of the Darkness Community Walks in person beginning fall 2021. The health and safety of our participants, staff and volunteers will be our top priorities as we make decisions about event details in your community, and we'll continue to offer options to participate online and in your neighborhood.

Now, more than ever, it's important to be there for one another and take steps to safeguard our mental health and prevent suicide.

### OOTD Community Walks, locally

Due to Covid the venue for most of these walks has not yet been listed, we are adding where the walks are typically held to aid in your planning.

09/18/2021	<a href="#">Eastern Washington Walk, Venue TBD - Spokane, WA</a>
09/25/2021	<a href="#">Kitsap County Walk, Venue TBD - Bremerton, WA (probably Evergreen Rotary Park)</a>
09/26/2021	<a href="#">Snohomish County Walk, Boxcar Park - Everett, WA</a>
10/02/2021	<a href="#">Whatcom County Walk, Venue TBD - Bellingham, WA</a>
10/02/2021	<a href="#">Greater Thurston County Walk, Venue TBD - Olympia, WA (probably Heritage Park)</a>
10/3/2021	<a href="#">Pierce County Walk, -Venue TBD Puyallup, WA (probably Bradley Lake Park)</a>
10/03/2021	<a href="#">Southwest Washington Walk, Venue TBD - Aberdeen, WA (probably Morrison Riverfront Park)</a>
10/24/2021	<a href="#">Seattle Walk, Venue TBD - Seattle, WA (probably Seattle Center)</a>

**Stay tuned for more information as we get it. Typically, we play a part in many of the walks here in Western Washington.**

Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us  
Every day...  
Unseen, unheard, but always near,  
Still loved, Still missed  
And very dear.

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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Permit #58*



<p><b>Too Soon</b></p> <p>A desk is empty, a smiling face is gone. The others look years older, their tenderness touched by pain.</p> <p>Let them cry, let them write, draw, sing about their friend, tell each other dreams where he appears.</p>	<p>Let them ask the unanswered question ... why? and express the inexpressible fear ... who next?</p> <p>Later, when they are parents, perhaps they'll remember, how precious young life is, and think again about their classmate who left too soon.</p> <p>Cathy Sosnowsky, TCF North Shore, BC</p>
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