

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

A NATIONAL OUTREACH & SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY A SUICIDE DEATH

2019
JANUARY



May and her
office dog, Cruz



MEET MAY BALLEW

May Ballew is a Sacramento native and brings many years of experience to her position as Administrative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator.

Losing her nephew in 2017, May, like many of us, has the unique perspective of losing a loved one to suicide. "I feel lucky to be able to work with Marilyn (an inspiration!) and this wonderful organization."

January: A fresh start on the year ahead. I am pleased to present our newly updated and reformatted newsletter. Our staff has worked hard to create something that we hope you will find valuable, informative and comforting... and at a lower cost than previous newsletters. We have a newly updated Facebook page and are revamping our website.

As we enter our 36th year, I want you to remember that we are here for you, providing comfort, experience, support and resources.

*Marilyn Koenig,
Executive Director*



Support

SUPPORT RESOURCES

Friends for Survival

www.friendsforsurvival.org

Phone: (916) 392-0664

Toll Free: (800) 646-7322

If you are in crisis and need immediate help, call the 24 hour National Crisis Line:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

www.afsp.org/find-support

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

www.suicidology.org

New York Life Foundation

Bereavement resources:

www.newyorklife.com/foundation/bereavement

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

For service members, veterans, and their families: www.taps.org

The Compassionate Friends

For bereaved parents of a deceased child: www.compassionatefriends.org

The National Center for Grieving Children & Families

The Dougy Center

www.dougy.org/grief-resources

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Resources to help veterans:

bit.ly/vetgriefconnection



This program is funded in part by the Division of Behavioral Health Services through the voter approved Proposition 63, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

NEW YEAR

by Clara Hinton

A new year holds personal meaning for everyone. Usually, a lot of time is taken for some inner reflection. As the old year ends and a new year begins, most people set new goals with lots of enthusiasm and a true spirit of wanting to do better. There is an honest attempt to forget past failures and focus on the future with feelings of bright hope.



When grief has been part of your daily life, it is a real challenge to be hopeful for a brighter new year. How do you heal broken relationships? How do you make a more secure financial future when beginning the new year without a job? How do you set lofty goals when you are sinking in a sea of depression? How do you begin to fill the hole in your heart that has been left when your loved one died?

**A NEW YEAR DOES NOT
END ALL PAST PAIN.**

**A NEW YEAR DOES NOT
MAKE EVERY WRONG
THING RIGHT.**

**A NEW YEAR WILL NOT
RESTORE BROKEN DREAMS.**

But a new year is just that: new. It is the making of an opportunity to begin again. It takes great courage to look for a miracle when your dreams have been shattered. Every person alive has a seed of hope planted within the heart that is ready to come alive if given a chance. Look at the new year, taking it one day at a time. With the breaking of each new dawn, claim one new promise of hope. When you do, your miracle will begin to happen!

Every new day has the potential to give you a miracle!

Source: *Survivors of Suicide, King/Pierce/Thurston County Support Groups.*

nature : stillness : observe

When we hold nature as our object of attention and appreciate it, we can feel its energy. By simply appreciating nature, it is an indication that we are in an area of alignment. When we are in alignment, we see more beauty around us, so the flowers look brighter and the grass looks greener. This is why it is helpful to spend a few minutes every day outside with our plants and flowers. Visit a park or nursery at your local hardware store. The more beauty we see in nature, the more beauty we see in ourselves.

**"LOOK DEEP INTO NATURE,
AND THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING BETTER."**

-ALBERT EINSTEIN



Time

by Cathy Schanberger

I HAVE BEEN GIFTED WITH GOOD FRIENDS AND SPECIAL PEOPLE TO HELP ME THROUGH THE ROUGH TIMES. BUT MOST OF ALL, I HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE GIFT OF TIME – TIME TO HEAL AND TIME TO REPLACE THOSE PAINFUL MEMORIES OF DEATH WITH THE PRICELESS MEMORIES OF MY SISTER'S LIFE.

Source: "This Healing Journey, an Anthology for Bereaved Siblings," Solano County The Compassionate Friends.

'Godwinks'

small moments of communication and reassurance

by Bevin Landrum

Don't we all long for a crystal clear sign that our connection with our loved one is not gone? They are still out there in whatever celestial or physical space you wish to embrace. They still love us and want us to know we are in their care.

It can seem silly at times to expect that, in the vastness of the universe, our need for affirmation will gain any traction. The expectation of waking up to a message in the snow or finding your loved one's lost keepsake after years seems, well, unrealistic. But small moments of communication and reassurance happen for many survivors, who recognize coincidences, chance encounters, miraculous interventions and other signs as flashes of certainty.

We spend so much time focused on finding meaning in our grief, forgetting that sometimes meaning and connection can still reach out to find us. As you face the mix of emotions that flood our minds and hearts at the holidays, I hope you will take time to slow down your thinking and open your mind to the serendipity of the season. Whether touching, poignant, humorous or crystal clear, there are small reminders from our loved ones waiting this season to come softly and tap us on the shoulder and say, "I'm still here. I still love you. I'm still walking with you."

Excerpt source: TAPS Magazine, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Arlington, VA

VIVIAN'S STORY

Vivian, loved stargazing with her dad. He bought her first telescope for her at Christmas when she was 10.

During the last meteor shower in August, she wanted to go out and watch, but had to get up super early every day for work. The last night she went out at midnight, which is early for the peak look at falling stars. She saw one and then not any more for another half hour.

Finally, knowing she had to get up early, she said, "Dad, if you're up there, send one more star so I know you love me and so I can go to bed." It didn't even take a minute before another star blazed down across the sky. She says she slept better than she had in months.



Thank You!

...to all who attended and volunteered at our second annual Rock'N Ribs Fundraiser. Our 2018 Honorees:



Kent & Lucy Smith, newsletter volunteers for 22 years
Ray & Vickie Sampson, Board Members and volunteer facilitators in Grass Valley, CA for 20 years
Tim & Jenny Heck, volunteer facilitators in Chico, CA for over 15 years
Walt & Leona Narr, volunteer facilitators in Cameron Park, CA for over 6 years
Chopi DeRose, volunteer extraordinaire and creator of "Rock'N Ribs"
Karen Eggen, volunteering for 11 years
Mike Chinn of Power Printing

unique ideas to
MEMORIALIZE
our loved ones

HEARTS ON YOUR WRIST

by Susan Reynolds

While I was working with our good friend and volunteer Noelle Hartshorn recently, she shared a beautiful piece of jewelry that she personally requested to be made to memorialize her son Oliver.

Hearts On Your Wrist is a family-run business, and they craft jewelry in their Northern California studio. I contacted owner and designer Beth Philbin... "My first personalized jewelry piece was a name bangle bracelet with my kids names on it. I fell in love with metalworking, and I was delighted to have a piece of personalized jewelry that allowed me to wear my "heart on my wrist".

"We do a lot of memorial jewelry, and we hear a lot of stories here, many of them heart-breaking. When we do hear the story behind an order, we will often gather around here and talk about it, and talk about the person we are creating the jewelry for. We know how much of an impact this little piece of jewelry may have on someone's life and healing. So we take it very seriously and are always humbled by someone trusting us with such a special memento."

**15% OFF! Special Coupon Code
just for Friends for Survival**

use this code:

FRIENDSFS

www.heartonyourwrist.com

Use the code for 15% off anything on their site!



Support

N. CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUPS

Our meetings are peer support, not therapy sessions. They are free and you are invited to attend for as long as you need. All locations are drop-in meetings, no RSVP required.

**Please call our office
for specific meeting
locations: 916-392-0664
or 1-800-646-7322**

Carmichael (Sacto)
Tuesday, 1/15 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Cameron Park
Tuesday, 1/8 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Chico
Monday, 1/14 @ 4:30pm - 6pm

Elk Grove
Wednesday, 1/9 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto
Monday, 1/21 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin
Thursday, 1/17 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Yuba City
Tuesday, 1/22 @ 6:30pm - 8pm