

Comforting Friends

Published by Friends for Survival, Inc.

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

2019
MAY



MOTHER'S DAY

by Judy A. Sittner

Another Mother's Day!
But a different one this year.
For, you see, I am a mother,
But my child isn't here.

I am a mother who is hurting
For this child who was so dear,
As I face this and other occasions,
each and every year.

I am a mother who feels an
emptiness. Over and over again,
Because I miss this child
And all that could have been.

I am a mother who cared
As I watched my child grow,
And truly loved her more
Than anyone will ever know.

I am a mother who has memories
And many tears to cry
Over regrets I'll have to live with
Until the day I die.

I am a mother who is thankful
For the miracle of birth,
And all my child has taught me
About life and my own self-worth.

I just can't stop being a mother
Just because my child isn't here
Because the love we had for
each other will continue for
years and years. And so ...

On this special "Mother's" day,
I feel within my heart
All the pride, love and joy
Which are the parts
That make me who I am,
And what I'll always be –
A MOTHER!

Source: *The Compassionate
Friends of Los Angeles*

May: We are still mothers even when our child is not with us here on earth. Some of you are trying to cope after the tragic death of your own mother. In time, we begin to focus on the good memories and are grateful for the years that we shared with our loved ones. Please remember to give on May 2, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation's Big Day of Giving. To make a donation, find us on www.bigdayofgiving.com. See our website under "Ways to Give" for more information about our 2019 Fundraising Goals.

Gratefully, Marilyn Koenig,
Executive Director



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)

Alliance of Hope

Survivor services including a 24/7 on-line community forum
www.allianceofhope.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

Extensive lists of available meeting support
www.afsp.org/find-support

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

www.suicidology.org

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

www.save.org

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



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

turtles

by Toni Groth

It was November 2013 when my daughter Amy, my mom and I were in a little postage-sized souvenir store in San Diego. A woman entered the store and told the clerk that she was looking for two little turtle necklaces.



Without hesitation, Amy started helping this woman. I remember thinking to myself: Amy is so thoughtful to help. Then I found myself helping her as well. I think my mom even joined in. We ended up finding her quite a few different turtle necklaces, so she had plenty to choose from.

"They are for a friend's daughters," she said, "because they helped us so much four months ago when our son passed away." Of course, we didn't ask her why her son passed away, but it was then that my mom and I both at the same time knew what she was going to say next. We hoped she was going to say he passed away from a tragic car accident or an illness, but no, he took his own life in her and her husband's bedroom.

We could not believe our ears! It was then that I told this woman, Gina, that my son too had taken his life three months earlier. Her son, Gavin, took his life on July 24, 2013 and my son, Ben, took his life August 7, 2013.

We were both flabbergasted that we were all in that small store at the same exact time, and had Amy not initially helped Gina, we may not have ever met Gina. Gina and her husband flew in to San Diego from Indianapolis for a few days for work. We were there because my husband was a volunteer for the 3-Day Susan Komen Walk.

After we realized our sons passed away so close to each other and the same way – we stepped outside and proceeded to talk for a very long time. We shared with each other what helped us get through each day, we spoke about therapy, about the Out of Darkness Walk, etc.

Amy and I became Facebook friends with Gina that same day. Periodically we send her messages and she us. We always reach out to each other on the anniversary of our sons' deaths. Gina and I both agree Gavin and Ben are dancing and singing in the skies above us, that place called heaven.

THE PRESSURES OF LIFE

by Clara Hinton

Sometimes the pressures of life become so heavy, it feels like the world is caving in on you, like the clouds will never part long enough for you to see the beauty of the sun shining again. Joy seems to have vanished from your heart.

Losing a loved one steals many dreams and brings about much pain. Life feels empty and dark for such a long time. The worst part of all is feeling so misunderstood and so completely alone.

Be assured that there is joy in the morning! With each new sunrise comes the promise of new hope. Every day brings countless possibilities of a miracle touching your life. Listen to the sound of the soft breezes rustling through the trees. Hear the happy melody of the songbird. Watch the dewdrops give a much-needed drink to the thirsty blade of grass. God's signature is everywhere! He has not forgotten you. You are never alone. Hope can be found everywhere!

Source: *HopeLine* newsletter, *HOPE for Bereaved*, Syracuse, NY



After the Rain

By Lana I. Kelsey

**AFTER THE RAIN, COMES THE SUN; AFTER THE DARKNESS, DAWN.
AFTER THE PAIN OF GROWTH HAS COME, THE LONELINESS IS GONE!
AFTER THE LOSSES, NEWFOUND GAINS; AFTER THE SORROW, JOY!
WITH EACH END, A NEW BEGINNING; FAITH AND HOPE RENEWED AGAIN.
LOVINGLY, WE LIVE AND LEARN. AFTER THE RAIN.**



remembering my mom

by Kevin Roy

My most treasured possessions are pictures of the way my family used to be. My mother's smile lights up portraits. My father called her the glue that held us together. "She was the center of our lives, that's the type of person she was," said Robert Roy, Kevin's father.

But behind that bright smile, Diane Marcus Roy had a lifelong battle with bipolar disorder and manic depression, which proved to be fatal. Growing up in River Forest, Illinois, there were few clues when my family lived here. At her 50th birthday party, no one could have imagined my mother would be dead a year-and-a-half later.

Her life started to unravel in 1993. After 29 years of marriage, she announced she wanted a divorce. She left my father, sold the house, quit her law practice and moved from Chicago to Sedona, Arizona – all within a year. She also had a new-found interest in anything that was of a 'spiritual' nature. "She was seeing spiritualists, card readers, psychics..." said Robert Roy.

There were so many changes in so little time. I later learned that they were classic signs of a manic phase. And so it was for the next six months. Her family wanting to believe these changes were all for the better. But then, suddenly, she crashed.

On a summer night in 1995, I came home to a message on my answering machine – my father telling me my mother was threatening suicide. We flew her back to Chicago. She met with a suicide counselor, and came up with a plan to leave Arizona and move back home. My mother even promised my sister and me that suicide was not an option. In late August of 1995, she flew back to Sedona, supposedly to sell her condo. Four days later we got a call from the Sedona Police. She was dead.

"She put herself in a bathtub, she lit candles, she had gone to the store and bought vodka (she never drank). She ingested this vodka as fast as she could," said Robert Roy. "I think I should have gotten on that airplane with her, I should have been smart enough to say 'no' to going on that airplane...but I was none of that."

My mother did leave a note written nearly a month before she died. She signed it: "Forgive me if you can... Love, Diane." Kevin's sister, Pamela Roy, shares: "I feel like she damaged me...she hurt me in such a horrible, horrible way."

Forgiveness has been difficult, especially forgiving ourselves for missing or overlooking some of the warning signs. Experts say a person might be suicidal if he or she talks about committing suicide, experiences drastic changes in behavior, withdraws from friends, loses interest in work, school and/or hobbies, or gives away prized possessions.

My mom gave away her dog weeks before she took her life. Now, it all seems so obvious.

She was mentally ill. Poor decisions and radical life changes sank her into a terrible depression. But tragically, my mother never was diagnosed as manic-depressive. She did take anti-depressants, on occasion...but she was never hospitalized and did not get the kind of help she really needed, because she was an expert at concealing her true feelings.

The psychologist who saw her at the suicide prevention center told me that my mother was the best they had ever seen at hiding what she felt. "Your mom was not logical and thoughtful at the time that she killed herself...it was her illness speaking and not her," said Dr. David Clark, Rush University Suicidologist.

Her illness may have had the final word. But as my photo albums show, she spoke to us with love and caring during her 51 years. It is those words I now hear. It is those words that I still miss.

Source: Survivors of Suicide Loss- San Diego County newsletter

Remember Life

by Rabbi Maurice Davie

I do not ask that you forget your dear departed, I want you to remember. I only ask that you remember more than the moment of death, more than the funeral, more than the house of mourning. Remember Life! Remember the whole life, not the final page of it.

Source: TCF Baltimore

OLIVER'S ROOM

by Noelle Hartshorn



I BUILT A SHED IN MY BACK YARD. IT IS DRYWALLED, PAINTED, CARPETED, AND COVERED WITH STARS--IT COULD BE AN EXTRA BEDROOM. AND TO ME, THAT'S JUST WHAT IT IS.

SOME PEOPLE CALL IT A SANCTUARY, A SHRINE, A "SPECIAL PLACE." BUT I CALL IT "OLIVER'S ROOM." IN IT ARE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO MY SON BEFORE HIS DEATH, AND THAT I AM NOT YET READY TO PART WITH.

TINY COWBOY BOOTS, POKEMON CARDS, A GUITAR. BITS AND PIECES OF HIS TOO-SHORT LIFE. I SPEND TIME IN HIS ROOM, REARRANGING AND CLEANING AND SIFTING

THROUGH PICTURES FROM OUR PAST. AND YES, I CRY. I KNOW THAT SOMEDAY I'LL START CLEANING OUT HIS ROOM, AS A MOM USUALLY DOES, BUT THESE MEMORIES BRING ME COMFORT.

SO FOR NOW I'LL SIMPLY SPEND TIME IN OLIVER'S ROOM, AND DECORATE IT WITH STARS, IN HONOR OF THE BRIGHT LITTLE STAR WHO ONCE SHONE IN MY LIFE.



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, 5/21 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Cameron Park

Tuesday, 5/14 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Chico

Monday, 5/6 @ 4:30pm - 6pm

Elk Grove

Wednesday, 5/8 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Modesto

Monday, 5/20 @ 7pm - 8:30pm

Roseville/Rocklin

Thursday, 5/16 @ 7pm - 8:30 pm

Yuba City

Tuesday, 5/28 @ 6:30pm - 8pm

