

Who can say if I've been changed for the better? But, because I knew you, I have been changed for good.
Stephen Schwartz

The Survivors of Suicide program and this newsletter depend in part on donations from the survivor community.

We offer our sincere appreciation for recent donations in memory of Melis, Jim, Emma E., Kevin S., Anthony K., and Keith S.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the Macomb Crisis Center

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Holiday Remembrance Program

SOS and the Macomb County Crisis Center extend a special invitation to you to join us to honor and remember the life of your loved one during this holiday season

**Thursday, December 13, 2012
7 pm - 9 pm**

**Trinity Lutheran Church Community Center
38900 Harper
Clinton Township, MI 48036
Note the new location!**

The loss of a loved one can hurt even more as the holiday season approaches. We invite you to take time for yourself (and your family) to remember those we have lost with a beautiful evening of hors d'oeuvres, music, and survivor speakers.

The program is free and we hope to see you there.

You are encouraged to bring a photo of your loved one to display as we honor their memory.

No charge (donations accepted). Dress casual.

To register for this event, e-mail jeni.baldwin@mccmh.net or call 586-948-6103.

Special thanks to Trinity Lutheran Church for the use of their Community Center for this event.

November/December 2012

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

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Holidays and Grieving Children

For children who have lost a loved one, the holiday season can be an emotional minefield. It can also pose challenges for their still grieving family members.

"Children carry their own expectations about the holidays, as well as their own grief over the loss," says Bonnie Carroll of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. "It can be a painful time for a bereaved child, but it can also be an opportunity to honor and remember the person who died and the legacy that special person left for that child."

These are some tips for supporting a bereaved child through the holiday season:

Even if the child does not talk about the loss often with you, do not expect the child to be "over it."

Children grieve on their own timeline and differently from adults. The child's feelings about the loss may re-surface, even if the child has not talked about the loss for a long time.

Don't pretend your family has not experienced a loss. Letting the child know that you also miss the person who died may help the child to know that it is okay to discuss his or her own feelings.

Make holiday plans that help you and the child feel nurtured, emotionally safe, and comfortable. Discuss holiday plans and which traditions will (or will not) be observed. Include the child in planning new traditions. Make an escape plan in case an event is more than you or your child can handle.

Laughter, play and joy are good for children. Children do not grieve continuously and need to take breaks from grieving.

Comfort items may help. Carrying or wearing something that belonged to or reminds the child of the loved one may help the child feel connected with the person who died.

Allow the child to remember the person through a tribute. Some examples of activities others have used include lighting a candle, hanging an ornament, creating an art project, writing a letter, making a donation, or releasing a balloon.

*Supporting Children Dealing with Grief During the Holidays:
Tips to Help
TAPS.org (2008)*

HEART LINES

EGGS

We turn out
as tippy as
eggs. Legs
are an illusion.
We are held
as in a carton
if someone
loves us.
It's a pity
only loss
proves this.

Kay Ryan

Sharing the Journey

Remember with Courage

Janelle M. Breese Biagioni

Twelve years ago, my husband died suddenly. Although it was only the end of October, department stores glittered with decorations. When purchasing outfits for my ten-and twelve-year-old daughters to wear to their father's funeral, the salesclerk innocently asked if I was getting a jump-start on my Christmas shopping.

I shall never forget the piercing pain in my heart as I drove home in tears, realizing just how out of sync I was with the outside world. The holiday momentum was building, and I felt as though I was being swallowed by a huge black hole. I wanted to scream. I wanted the world to stop spinning. I wanted to run away. But more than anything, I wanted my family back.

December 25th approached quickly. I struggled with wanting to dismiss Christmas and yet, at the same time, to embrace the childhood excitement my daughters were beginning to brim with. They made their annual wish list and insisted on decorating the house. Through their actions, it became abundantly clear that Christmas was going to happen whether I wanted it to or not.

My girls taught me more about grieving than I could have ever taught them. They missed their dad terribly. Yet they were able to perceive the enchantment of Christmas as they had in years prior, albeit in a different way. Being children, they were relieved of any self-judgment that would make them fear that they were disrespecting their father's memory. They instinctively knew their lives had to go on, and they showed me that mine had to as well.

Christmas did go on for us that year. And yes, it was very different. The three of us pulled together as a family and developed new traditions to help us face the day. We hung a picture of my husband in the Christmas tree, declaring him our "Christmas Star." We dedicated Christmas Eve as a day to honor him

by visiting the cemetery. The tears flowed, but in a very healing way. We spent Christmas Day with extended family and close friends. During dinner, we exchanged stories of years gone by, many of them bringing smiles and laughter to everyone. In reflection, I am thankful we found the courage to embrace Christmas that year.

If you are facing your first Christmas after the loss of someone you love, I encourage you to reach out to someone you trust and share your feelings with them. Know that you are not alone, although you may feel this way. Many people have been where you are, and we care deeply.

*Excerpt from Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul
Health Communications, Inc. (2003)*

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

1st Wednesday
and 3rd Tuesday of each month
Wednesday, November 7
Tuesday, November 20
Wednesday, December 5
Tuesday, December 18
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Fox Pointe Center, 46360 Gratiot
South of 21 Mile Road
Enter door at rear of building

A new morning group has been added to the monthly support group schedule.

Thursday, November 15
Thursday, December 13
10 a.m. to 12 noon
Alexander Macomb
Early Learning Center
11 Grand Street, Mt. Clemens
Park and enter off Gratiot

Questions? Call 586-307-9100

Upcoming Events

November 2012

Craft Nite

Monday, November 26, 6pm-9pm

December 2012

Holiday Remembrance Program*
Thursday, December 13, 7pm-9pm

new location:

Trinity Lutheran Church

Community Center

38900 Harper

Clinton Township, MI 48036

see back page for details

No Craft Nite in December

January 2013

Craft Nite

Monday, January 28, 6pm-9pm

February 2013

Craft Nite

Monday, February 27, 6pm-9pm

**To register for a special event, e-mail
jeni.baldwin@mccmh.net or call
586-948-6103. Leave your name, phone
number, and e-mail address; the name of the
event; and the number of people attending.*

*All activities take place at Fox Pointe Center,
46360 Gratiot, unless otherwise noted.*

*Please watch future newsletters for additional
information as it becomes available.
Events are subject to change.*