

I'm not where I need to be,
but thank God
I'm not where I used to be.
Joyce Meyer Ministries

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 J.P. and William.

SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE NEWSLETTER

is published bi-monthly by the Macomb Crisis Center

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You are invited to join us for our Survivors of Suicide

Six Week Educational Workshop "Understanding Suicide"

A unique educational workshop designed to help survivors heal the intense feelings of emotional pain that often follow in the aftermath of a loved one's suicide. We invite you to come learn about the complexities of suicide and the grief process. Survivors will find healing through education and through sharing their experiences with others who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Workshop Topics Include:

- The Stages of Grief
- The Suicidal Mind
- Tunnel Vision
- The Suicidal Personality
- Healing After Suicide

The workshop is presented by Jean Larch, author of *Dying to Be Free: A Healing Guide for Families after a Suicide* (Hazelden, 2006). The workshop runs for six consecutive Wednesday evenings. Participants are asked to register in advance and are encouraged to attend all six sessions.

**When: Wednesdays
August 29, September 5, 12, 19, 26, October 3
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

**Where: Macomb Intermediate School District
44001 Garfield Road (south of Hall Road)
Clinton Township**

To register please call 586-948-6103 or e-mail jeni.baldwin@mccmh.net

There is no charge for this program. Donations are appreciated.

September/October 2012

Survivors Of Suicide NEWSLETTER

MACOMB COUNTY CRISIS CENTER

(586) 307-9100

The Search for Peace

I have learned so many life lessons from survivors over the past 25 years and it certainly has led me to explore the mysteries of life...and death. As a result I recently began training myself to reflect each morning and list the many blessings in my life that I am grateful for; I then silently list what is good about the day and what was good in the past 24 hours. Next, I silently ask for guidance that as my day unfolds that it be filled with thoughts of peace, joy, fun and being truly helpful...rather than with any pain, problems and/or grief. But more often than not, grief will reign until I can learn to hang onto my morning intentions into my days and nights.

In my humble opinion there is no greater gift than to be able to be of service to others, and this can help us heal our own grief. We can feel "golden" inside

when we offer assistance to anyone else, whether a friend or stranger. We can experience kindness, compassion, joy, and peacefulness when we truly help another hurting person. We can extend ourselves and grow at the same time, even when we are experiencing a state of grief.

When we suffer and experience grief we can feel hopeless and lonely, pregnant and hot with the desire to find peace. We quickly learn we don't like this thing called grief; leading us to seek and search for peace within our world of suffering. When we suffer, we can become fearful and lose any sense of peace we might have had...and in some way we send out a desperate cry for love.

Our grief experience can be an opportunity to offer ourselves to our fellow mankind...to people who are experiencing a similar

loss of peace and feeling fearful. By extending one's self to another, one's mind is distracted from its own grieving thoughts even if temporarily...the reward can be priceless. I remind myself no encounter is by chance; the universe is so intricately woven, there can be no mistaken or careless encounter.

Life frequently offers each of us the opportunity to experience grief on a regular basis. But life also offers the opportunity for experiencing compassion by looking beyond our grief and pain, and extending ourselves in each and every encounter that takes place...and to truly help ourselves and others find and get in touch with peace.

*Jean Larch, 2012
(Jean is the author of
Dying to Be Free: A Healing
Guide for Families after a
Suicide, Hazelden, 2006)*

HEART LINES

Don't Tell Me That You Understand

Don't tell me that you understand
Don't tell me that you know,
Don't tell me that I will survive
Or how I will surely grow.

Don't tell me that this is just a test
That I am truly blessed
That I am chosen for this task
Apart from all the rest.

Don't come at me with answers
That can only come from me,
Don't tell me how my grief will pass,
That I will soon be free.

Don't stand in pious judgment
Of the bounds I must untie,
Don't tell me how to suffer
And don't tell me how to cry!

My life is filled with selfishness,
My pain is all I see,
But, I need you now,
I need your love, unconditionally.

Accept me in my ups and downs,
I need someone to share,
Just hold my hand and let me cry,
And say, "My friend, I care."

Joanetta Hendel
Bereavement Magazine

Sharing the Journey

Grief Helps Others

Heather Black

Linda Maurer studies a framed portrait of a beautiful young woman with long blonde hair and striking hazel eyes – her only child, Molly, who died in a railroad accident on a spring-break trip through Mexico with friends when she was only 19. That Sunday afternoon Linda and Larry received the fateful phone call. "Is it Molly?" Linda gasped when Larry's face turned white as a sheet, and she nearly passed out when he nodded yes. "Is she dead?" she asked, but deep in her heart Linda could already sense the answer. In the blink of an eye her precious Molly was gone.

"I simply can't bear this pain," Linda sobbed as mourners gathered at the family's home to offer their condolences and love. "I'll never see Molly graduate from college and begin a career," she grieved. "I'll never see her fall in love or start a family of her own."

The pain was so unbearable that Linda became briefly suicidal. But her friend Kay took Linda in hand. "See those kids?" she said, pointing to Molly's many friends who had gathered to share their tears and their memories. "If you take your own life, how many of them do you suppose might follow you? And what about Larry? He needs you just as much as you need him. The two of you must face this tragedy together."

For months Linda was unable to go out of the house because she couldn't bear the sight of any of Molly's favorite places. Once, when she felt strong enough to venture out to buy a friend a birthday card, Linda bolted from the shop in tears. "The racks were filled with Mother's Day cards," she wept that night in Larry's arms.

It was the day after Christmas when Linda spotted a newspaper account of a young boy who had perished in a holiday skiing accident. Her heart went out to the child's parents, and soon Linda was pouring out her feelings in a letter. "If there's anything we can do, please call," she urged, and a few weeks later the boy's parents came for a visit.

"How do you go on?" the newly bereaved mom asked in a tear-choked voice. "We help each other," Linda explained. "It's the only way."

Linda's words seemed to comfort the couple, and from that day forward whenever Molly's mom heard of a child who had died she always took time to send the parents a heartfelt letter. The writing brought Linda solace, and many of those who received her notes called or wrote back to say how much her gentle words had helped them through their darkest hours.

One morning Linda awoke from hugging Molly in a dream with a single thought resounding in her head. "I'm going to write a book," she decided, and began that very afternoon. She described the sudden triggers of grief and loss, and how she and Larry finally found the strength to start living again. "Helping others is what God means for me to do with my life," Linda realized with sudden clarity.

Linda wrote not one book but two: *I Don't Know How to Help Them*, for friends and family of bereaved parents, and *Standing Beside You*, which she wrote for grieving moms and dads. She self-published both books and included her address so anyone who wanted could contact her. Soon the letters began pouring in, and Linda answers each and every correspondence personally.

Linda also attends book signings and organizes discussion groups afterward. These meetings always take their toll on Linda. Afterward, she lies awake for several nights, haunted by all the sad stories she's heard, and because she knows that for so many of the parents she met, the real pain is only beginning.

Linda spends several hours every day at her desk answering the dozens of letters she receives each week from bereaved parents, their friends and their families. "If I can help one person get through another 24 hours, I know that my Molly is proud of me," she says. "She's with me always. She's standing right here beside me, and the memories don't hurt anymore."

*excerpt from Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul
Health Communications (2003)*

Survivors of Suicide Support Group Meetings

(1st Wednesday and 3rd Tuesday of each month)

Wednesday, September 5

Tuesday, September 18

Wednesday, October 3

Tuesday, October 16

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Fox Pointe Center, 46360 Gratiot
South of 21 Mile Road
Enter door at rear of building
Questions? Call 586-307-9100

Upcoming Events

September 2012

Six Week Workshop:

Understanding Suicide*

Macomb Intermediate School District

Wednesdays, 6:30pm-8:30pm

8/29/12 - 10/3/12

Craft Nite, Monday, September 24,

6pm-9pm

October 2012

Craft Nite, Monday, October 29,

6pm-9pm

November 2012

Craft Nite, Monday, November 26,

6pm-9pm

December 2012

Holiday Program

*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.