

# OUT OF THE SHADOWS

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING FOR SOMEONE LOST TO SUICIDE

## Different Paths

*Reprinted from Healing the Hurt Spirit, Daily Affirmations for People Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide by Catherine Greenleaf (St. Dymphna Press, 2006).*

Not all family members react to suicide in the same way. One family member may choose to isolate and not speak to anyone for a year, because they're too sad to say anything. Another member of the family may immediately enter into group or individual therapy for survivors and incessantly talk their way through it, much to the chagrin of withdrawn family members. Another may deny that anything at all happened and expect all the other members to pretend along with them. Still another may tell everyone that mourning is a form of self-pity (it's not), making everyone else feel guilty for going through a healing process. One thing is for sure, you can expect the dynamics of the family to change.

*Each person's journey is sacred. Today, I will concentrate on my own path.*

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## "Love Never Dies" Memorial Quilts

TSPN's latest "Love Never Dies" Memorial Quilt was unveiled during the Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event at Trevecca Community Church on September 14. About 325 people attended this year's ceremony, the most people ever in the history of the event.

The "Love Never Dies" quilt project personalizes the phenomenon of suicide, demonstrating that suicide is not some abstract social phenomenon, but a legitimate public health crisis that affects many people within a given community. These quilts are routinely displayed at TSPN educational and awareness events all over Tennessee.

Anyone is welcome to contribute a quilt square, at no charge, no matter how long ago you lost someone.

More information is available at <http://tspn.org/quilt>. Any additional questions may be directed to Karyl Chastain Beal, chair of our Quilt Committee, at [arlynsmom@bellsouth.net](mailto:arlynsmom@bellsouth.net) or (931) 388-9289.

## How Beautiful

*Tara Dye, wife and mother of two and a contributor to Medium.com, published this post on September 18.*

*We appreciate Tara giving us permission to reprint this piece, as well as her brother Chad Gurley (a former TSPN field placement student and now Director of Connections and Communications at Christ Church NYC) for the referral.*

I remember it like it was yesterday the first time I heard the song "How Beautiful". I was home visiting for Mother's Day. That year was a little different because Chad, my brother, had not made it home to Blytheville from New York for the weekend and my mom was down from the recent loss of her younger brother. His death was hard and only a few months had passed since he had lost his battle with cancer. We sat on the velvety maroon cushions that were so familiar from the many years we attended the church. I missed not being able to sit there with Mom and Dad every Sunday since life had taken me to be a teacher in Jonesboro. Then a soloist went to the mike. Mom looked at me with her kind brown eyes and said, "This is one of my favorite songs." I listened carefully to each word and understood why it was one her favorites. "How beautiful the heart that bled that took all the sin and bore it instead," the words came out clearly. Mom smiled taking my hand. She loved God so much and the forgiveness he gave us. She squeezed my hand harder as the next verse came, "How beautiful the radiant bride who waits for her groom with the light in his eyes." She knew I had recently found the man I would spend the rest of my life with. Even though no proposal had been made, we anticipated it to happen at some point. I squeezed her hand back with so much love and desire for her to know... "This song will be played at my wedding." She smiled and quietly said, "That would be perfect." I felt the love surge through us that only a daughter and mother could feel.

If I would have known that my mom, my best friend who I told everything to and could not go a day without speaking would take her own life 2 days later completely unexpected, I would have made time stand still during that song. Unfortunately, we did not know and will never understand what truly triggered the end of her life. Even in the note she left us, she did not explain why, she just assured us it wasn't our fault and that she loved us more than we could ever imagine. She looked for that forgiveness sung during her favorite song as she chose to take matters in her own hands.

As we prepared for her funeral, we were asked for a song to be sung during the service. Dad, Chad, and I were far from the decision makers in our family and looked at each other in a daze. I found the words finally coming out of my mouth, "It must be her favorite song... mine now too... 'How Beautiful,' by Twilla Paris."

The funeral was a complete blur. So many tears. I did not think I could possibly hold that many tears in my body. I heard people crying all around me. I looked over at dad and saw tears pouring down his face. I grabbed his hand and reached across him to touch my brother who was slumped over, head in hands. The four that we used to be had become three so unexpectedly. There had been so much laughter in our home. So much love. Somehow all that wasn't enough. She only felt loved by us, yet 1,500 people filled the pews. All eyes were on us wondering what possibly could have happened. Mom wasn't there to assure me that all of the stares were out of love and not out of blame. Mom wasn't there to comfort me like she had all of my life. Mom wasn't there to hold us all together. Tears and more tears. I didn't hear another word the preacher said until the song began. "How beautiful the tender eyes that chose to forgive and never despise." The words spoke to me almost like it was my mom asking for forgiveness from us through the song. As they sang the song, I closed my eyes. I felt her close to me. The

unanswered questions, sadness, anger, and disbelief left me for that one moment. A moment only the two of us could share. It was "our" song. I for the first time since she had passed did not feel alone.

A little over a year later as I picked out a wedding dress, a venue, and a place for our wedding all without mom I struggled with the questions of what she would think and what would she do. I could not bear to have the wedding at the church with so many memories. I did not want to walk down the same aisle I walked down to view my mom in her casket. So, I chose a small chapel in Eureka Springs. The beauty of the chapel alone was all I needed. There were only two things I knew I had complete approval on from my mom for that special day. She approved the man I was marrying and the one and only song sung at the wedding. Even though the song was bitter sweet it was extremely important to me that a part of her was there that day at the wedding. "How Beautiful" was played in memory of my mom during the seating of the mothers. I knew when she heard "our" song she knew where to go and took her seat in the front row.



*Photo courtesy of colorful.bigbangfish.com.*

## Testimony

*Sheila Wade provided the following eulogy at the graveside service for her brother Darryl Weems, who died on August 30 the week prior to his 45th birthday. He was the youngest of 11 children and, at the time of his death, assisting with the care of his mother.*

*Sheila, who currently resides in Hawaii, has graciously offered to share this testimonial with Out of the Shadows as part of her initial foray into mental health and suicide prevention activism.*

In church on Sunday before this tragedy happened, the message was "Someone needs to hear your testimony". I didn't really understand what testimony I had to impart until Tuesday, August 30, as some of you may be going thru the same things our family has now experienced and it may help you. I am not trying to offend or upset anyone—this is from my heart.

Family and friends—today I ask you to forgive yourselves forgive each other, and please forgive and not judge our brother Darryl. According to Romans 14:23: "Let us not judge one another anymore but rather resolve this—not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way."

Darryl was loved by so many and it is very apparent by the numerous phone calls, visits, kind words, and sincere actions shown to our family by this close-knit community in this time of extreme sorrow.

Darryl will not be forgotten as we will remember the great times we had with him. He was very quick-witted and a sense of humor you really had to appreciate. He had a knack for coming up with nicknames or words of endearment like "My Little Bunion, Chucky Boots, Johnson, and Johnny"—the endless list goes on as you well know better than I.

He was so kindhearted and sentimental as evidenced by things that happened just this last week—picking 3 roses from the rosebush outside and telling Mama "I am bringing you the prettiest ones", cutting Mama's hair and actually doing a great job with clippers (he told Mama he did not cut women's hair—she said, "Well, you are today!"), clipping Mama's fingernails and toenails (I didn't even do that!). These special memories are what Mama will hold dear in her heart as this is the Darryl she will remember.

Darryl would not want us to occupy our minds with "what ifs" and "if only". I am sure he would want us to make amends with each other, let bygones be bygones, love one another, and not throw stones. As stated in Ephesians 4:26-27, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil." My plea to all here—if anyone speaks to you about killing themselves, please take it seriously. Take them to someone for help whether it is a minister or mental health counselor. From this day forward, do not say, "I wish I would have". I would hate to see anyone having to face the heartbreak that we are feeling now. Life is precious and too short to live in regret.

Depression and addiction (whether to alcohol or drugs) is a disease and very hard for anyone to fight alone. Please do not ignore the signs/pleas for help. Look inside yourself and admit if this applies to you. Do not put off tomorrow the help you need to seek today for yourself or someone you love. I am talking to someone here today—please listen!"

Do not live to regret the phone call not made, the letter never written, the card not delivered, the words not spoken, the apology not given, the love never shown. I loved my brother Darryl as I do love all of my remaining seven brothers and one sister. I love others here which include my mother, my daughters, my grandchildren, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and dear friends (sorry in my haste, I forgot to mention my sister-in-law and son-in-law). May God bless and comfort all of you in this time of extreme sorrow. Amen.

Several have asked for a copy of my testimony! Feel free to share with anyone who may need this!

If you would like to remember your loved one in "Out of the Shadows", please send your loved one's name, birth date, death date, your name, and your email address to [tspn@tspn.org](mailto:tspn@tspn.org) with the subject line "Remembrance."

"Out of the Shadows" wants your articles, poetry, prose, and artwork for the next issue and the ones to come. We'll also need suggestions and recommendations on how we can make it better.

If there's a piece you want to submit to the newsletter, send it to [tspn@tspn.org](mailto:tspn@tspn.org) with the subject line "OOS Submission".

Feedback and suggestions can also be sent to this address with the subject line "OOS Feedback".

## Tips for Handling the Holidays

Reprinted from *Survivors After Suicide: Your Path Toward Healing*, published by the Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center in Culver City, California.

There is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays. Some may wish to follow family traditions, while others may choose to change. It helps to know that anticipation of any holiday is so much worse than the actual holiday. Here are some choices to make:

1. Decide what you can handle comfortably and let family and friends know.
  - Can I handle the responsibility of the family dinner, etc. or shall I ask someone else to do it?
  - Do I want to talk about my loved one or not?
  - Shall I stay here for the holidays or go to a completely different environment?
2. Make some changes if they feel comfortable for you.
  - Open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning. Vary the timing of Chanukah gift giving.
  - Have dinner at a different time or place.
  - Let the children take over decorating the house, the tree, baking and food preparation, etc.
3. Re-examine your priorities: greeting cards, holiday baking, decorating, putting up a tree, family dinner, etc.
  - Do I really enjoy doing this?
  - Is this a task that can be shared?
4. Consider doing something special for someone else.
  - Donate a gift in the memory of your loved one.
  - Donate money you would have spent on your loved one as a gift to charity.
  - Adopt a needy family for the holidays.
  - Invite a guest (foreign student, senior citizen) to share festivities.
5. Recognize your loved one's presence in the family.
  - Burn a special candle to quietly include your loved one.
  - Hang a stocking for your loved one in which people can put notes with their thoughts or feelings.
  - Listen to music especially liked by the deceased.
  - Look at photographs.
6. If you decide to do holiday shopping, make a list ahead of time and keep it handy for a good day, or shop through a catalog.
7. Observe the holidays in ways that are comfortable for you.
  - There is no right or wrong way of handling the holidays.
8. Try to get enough rest – holidays can be emotionally and physically draining.
9. Allow yourself to express your feelings.
  - Holidays often magnify feelings of loss. It is natural to feel sadness.
  - Share concerns, apprehensions, feelings with a friend. The need for support is often greater during holidays.
10. Keep in mind that the experience of many bereaved persons is that they do come to enjoy the holidays again. There will be another holiday season to celebrate.
11. Don't be afraid to have fun. Laughter and joy are not disrespectful. Give yourself and your family members permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holidays.



Photo courtesy of galleryhip.com.

## Suicide Loss Survivors Needed for Academic Survey



The University of Kentucky is seeking suicide loss survivors for a online survey.

This survey asks questions about the participant, the person who died, and the participant's experiences and perceptions of his or her contact with physicians after the loss.

The researchers intend to use the results to inform recommendations for physicians as they respond to bereaved individuals following a death.

The University of Kentucky study is available at <http://bit.ly/1X38CVN>.

## New Suicide Grief Support Group in Morristown



*Photo of First Baptist Church of Morristown,  
courtesy of Google Street View.*

TSPN is proud to announce the establishment of "ComPASS (Communicating the Pain as Suicide Survivors)", headquartered in Morristown. This group is intended for people in Hamblen County and surrounding areas who have lost loved ones to suicide.

The group meets from 2:00-3:30 PM on the second Sunday of each month at the First Baptist Church of Morristown, located at 504 West Main Street, ZIP 37814.

More information about the group is available from Dr. Cynthia Lynn at [clynn3118@gmail.com](mailto:clynn3118@gmail.com) or (865) 680-3256. Dr. Lynn also facilitates the ComPASS group that meets in Jefferson City at 6 PM on the first Thursday of the month.

## Remembrances

- Steven Anthony Cedillo  
11/2/1990-12/6/2009
- Kimberly Kay Edens  
11/3/1985-2/13/2007
- Cindy Trotter Hollifield  
8/25/1958-11/4/2013
- Mark Edward Lee McCormack  
12/11/1978-11/7/1998
- Blake David Anderson  
4/25/1999-11/9/2015
- Justin Jerome Barber  
11/22/1982-11/10/2010
- Roger Dale Smith, Jr.  
11/15/1985-4/4/2010
- David James Butler  
10/8/1962-11/18/2011
- Benjamin Hal Armstrong  
9/1/1994-11/18/2015
- Lorna Hatcher Norwood  
11/19/1960-12/4/2012
- Glen Romero  
11/19/1970-12/17/2014
- Darren G. Cox  
11/20/1968-12/23/2012
- Sarah Elaine Tinder  
6/19/1984-11/22/2012
- Brent D. Hogshead  
6/22/1943-11/24/1996
- Debbie Gulliot  
3/12/1959-11/27/2004
- Sean McKittrick  
11/28/1984-4/28/2004
- April Michelle LeFever  
12/1/1974-9/16/1990
- Jessica Tatum Austin  
12/1/1992-10/24/2013
- Matthew Raymond Workens  
12/6/1982-12/1/2007
- Jordan Jair Rashan Turner  
6/18/1992-12/2/2012
- Juanita Suzette Douglas  
12/3/1949-4/28/2007
- David Christopher Cotton  
12/5/1988-3/17/2010
- Bob Birdwell  
12/6/1957-9/18/2014
- Autumn "Coco" Corinne Chadwick  
12/6/1989-5/4/2011
- Corey Onken  
12/8/1988-4/13/2006
- Dustin Kyle Puckett  
3/1/1968-12/9/2002
- Mark Edward Lee McCormack  
12/11/1978-11/7/1998
- Jonathan Stanfill  
12/11/1989-10/18/2015
- Jonathan Lee Clemons  
9/30/1985-12/13/2004
- Jefferson O'Neal Grice  
6/1/1970-12/14/2000
- Jesse Hal Epstein  
2/14/1957-12/14/2004
- Richard Allen Thomas  
5/7/1974-12/14/2012
- Mica Lynn Breeden Martin  
12/15/1982-12/16/2011
- Jessica Diane Jenkins Alexander  
9/21/1952-12/16/1991
- Mica Lynn Breeden Martin  
12/15/1982-12/16/2011
- Hugh Martin Mitchell, Jr.  
12/20/1955-4/14/1998
- Brad Kurd  
12/21/1977-6/12/2014
- Richard Allen LaBonte  
12/24/1943-4/11/2007
- Terry Lynn Nelson  
4/29/1957-12/25/2006
- Jay Matthew Knight  
6/10/1992-12/26/2012
- Charles (Chuck) F. O'Neil  
12/28/1940-8/28/2001
- Richard Edward Hatch  
12/28/1986-7/23/2009
- Tyler Ross Bradley  
12/30/1991-6/15/2011
- Bradley Hayes Fowlkes  
1/28/1987-12/30/2005
- Ashley Marie Rogers  
1/17/1982-12/30/2006
- Charles William Dugger  
5/5/1932-12/30/2013
- Paul John Sanders  
12/31/1974-4/24/2005
- Eileen Joy Lamont Forte  
10/17/1944-12/31/2009

**We talk about them, not because we're stuck or because we haven't moved on, but we talk about them because we are theirs, and they are ours, and no passage of time will ever change that.**

SCRIBBLES & CRUMBS

## Grief Support & Survivors' Meetings

### West Tennessee

#### **Jackson**

Survivors of Suicide Loss  
Paula Terry ([pcterry64@yahoo.com](mailto:pcterry64@yahoo.com))  
(731) 609-8897

#### **Memphis**

Healing Hearts Suicide Grief Support Group  
Kerry Mitchell  
[momofajamaje@yahoo.com](mailto:momofajamaje@yahoo.com)  
(901) 208-6814

### Middle Tennessee

#### **Clarksville**

Survivors of Suicide Loss  
Veronica R. Conley  
[veronica.conley@centerstone.org](mailto:veronica.conley@centerstone.org)  
Debbie Mashburn  
[debbie.h.mashburn@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.h.mashburn@gmail.com)  
(478) 320-7973

#### **Columbia**

GRief After SuicideS (GRASS)  
Karyl Chastain Beal  
[karyl@columbia@cs.com](mailto:karyl@columbia@cs.com)  
(931) 388-9289  
[grief-after-suicide.com](http://grief-after-suicide.com)

#### **Cookeville**

"Journey" grief support groups  
(931) 525-2600  
[info@heartofthecumberland.org](mailto:info@heartofthecumberland.org)

#### **Franklin/ Murfreesboro/ Nashville**

Survivors of Suicide Loss  
(615) 244-7444 (24/7)

#### **Spring Hill**

Left Behind By Suicide  
Douglas Johnson  
[tennesseedj@bellsouth.net](mailto:tennesseedj@bellsouth.net)  
(615) 435-9621

### East Tennessee

#### **Chattanooga**

SITE (Suicide Isn't the End)  
Tonia Shadwick  
[wckdstepmom@comcast.net](mailto:wckdstepmom@comcast.net)  
(423) 834-1709

#### **Survivors of Suicide Loss**

Hilda Bevans  
[zueslittlebear@aol.com](mailto:zueslittlebear@aol.com)  
(423) 697-9432  
[www.suicideperspective.com](http://www.suicideperspective.com)

#### **Jefferson City**

ComPaSS (Communicating the Pain as Suicide Survivors)  
Cynthia Lynn  
[clynn3118@gmail.com](mailto:clynn3118@gmail.com)  
(865) 680-3256

#### **Johnson City/Gray**

Tri-Cities Survivors of Suicide Loss  
Linda Harold  
[lindaphips1973@gmail.com](mailto:lindaphips1973@gmail.com)  
(423) 245-5608

#### **Knoxville**

Suicide Grievers Support Group  
Paula J. Alexander, LCSW, CGC  
[pj4031@tds.net](mailto:pj4031@tds.net)

#### **Morristown**

ComPASS (Communicating the Pain as Suicide Survivors)  
Cynthia Lynn  
[clynn3118@gmail.com](mailto:clynn3118@gmail.com)  
(865) 680-3256

For more information on survivors' groups and groups outside Tennessee proper which have members from Tennessee (in other words, far eastern Tennessee and the Memphis area), please visit

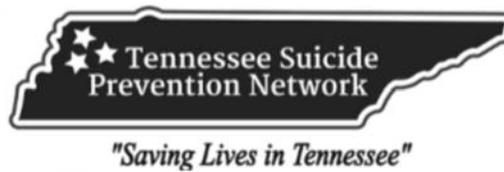
<http://tspn.org/for-survivors-of-suicide>.

## Need Help Right Now?

Losing a loved one to suicide is emotionally overwhelming. Survivors of suicide are at risk for attempting suicide because of the emotional upheaval they are experiencing. Feelings of hopelessness, feeling trapped, feeling like a burden to others, increased alcohol or drug consumption, sleeping too little or too much, and withdrawing or feeling isolated from others are signs that you or a loved one may need help now.

If you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please seek help immediately. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or visit [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

**NATIONAL**  
**SUICIDE**  
**PREVENTION**  
**LIFELINE™**  
**I-800-273-TALK**  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



TSPN works across the state to eliminate the stigma of suicide and educate communities about the warning signs of suicide, with the ultimate goal of reducing suicide rates in the state of Tennessee. TSPN's continued success is due in large part to volunteers willing to donate their time and energy. If you would like to volunteer with TSPN, please call (615) 297-1077 or e-mail [tspn@tspn.org](mailto:tspn@tspn.org).

## TSPN Regional Meetings

### East Tennessee Region

monthly, 3rd Thursday, 12:15 PM  
Third Floor Conference Room, Cherokee Health Systems, 2018 Western Avenue, Knoxville, 37921

### Memphis/Shelby County Region

monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 11:30 AM  
Memphis Crisis Centers Training Facility, 70 North Pauline, Memphis, 38105

### Mid-Cumberland Region

monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9:30 AM  
TSPN central office, 446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224, Nashville, 37211

### Northeast Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM  
Frontier Health, 1167 Spratlin Park Drive, Gray, 37615

### Rural West

monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 10:30 AM  
Fifth Floor, West Tennessee Healthcare Building, 1804 Highway 45 Bypass, Jackson, 38305

### South Central

monthly, 1st Wednesday, 11:00 AM  
Conference Room A, South Central Regional Health Office, 1216 Trotwood Avenue, Columbia, 38401

### Southeast Region

monthly, first Thursday, 11:30 AM  
Omni Community Health, 1635 Chestnut Street, Chattanooga, 37408

### Upper Cumberland Region

monthly, 4th Thursday, 9:00 AM  
Volunteer Behavioral Health, 1200 Willow Avenue, Cookeville, 38502

### Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance

monthly, 1st Friday, 12:00 PM  
Boys and Girls Club Meeting Room, Fort Craig Elementary School, 520 South Washington Street, Maryville, 37804

### Bradley-McMinn-Meigs-Polk Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 2nd Wednesday, 11:30 AM  
Pine Ridge Treatment Center, Tennova Healthcare, 2800 Westside Drive Northwest, Cleveland, 37312

### Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 4th Tuesday, 3:00 PM  
Large Conference Room at Mental Health Cooperative, 275 Cumberland Bend Drive, Nashville 37228

### Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force

quarterly, 3rd Monday, 10:30 AM  
Giles County Career Center, 125 South Cedar Lane, Pulaski, 38478

### Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention for Hickman-Perry Counties

monthly, 4th Friday, 12:00 PM (lunch served at 11:30 AM)  
Conference Room, St. Thomas Hickman Hospital, 135 East Swan Street, Centerville, 37033

### Montgomery-Houston-Humphreys-Stewart Suicide Prevention Task Force

monthly, 3rd Friday, 9 AM  
Youth Villages, 651 Stowe Court, Clarksville, 37040

### Rutherford County Suicide Prevention Coalition

monthly, 1st Tuesday, 5:15 PM  
TrustPoint Hospital, 1009 North Thompson Lane, Murfreesboro, 37129

### Important notice:

Most of TSPN's regional meetings are not held during the month of December. Check the regional information pages on the TSPN website (<http://tspn.org/regional-information>) to confirm whether or not a meeting will take place that month.