



The Lighthouse

Touched By Suicide
Survivors Gather

Volume 10 Issue 1 Summer 2012

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Laura Peterson Layout

The Suicide Support group gatherings are open to all individuals who have been touched by suicide. The group meets year round on the first Wednesday of the month 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at Hospice of the Rock River Valley, between Dixon and Sterling at 264 Illinois Route 2, Dixon.

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Newsletter of Touched by Suicide, Survivors Gather

Volume 10 Issue 1

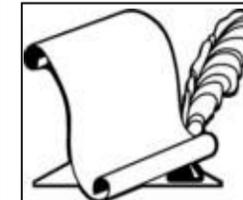
Summer 2012

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URGENT REQUEST

If you know of interesting persons, organizations and/or events concerned with suicide prevention that would be useful to others, please send us information about them. Also, it would be particularly helpful to share new publications and media that you value.



From the Editor

AS WE SEE IT: SINNISSIPPI CENTERS and THE LIGHTHOUSE: COOPERATING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In December, 2000, twenty-nine persons came together at Hospice of Rock River for the first meeting of a suicide support group in this area. The two founders of Touched By Suicide, Survivors Gather, Kim Brabender, Rock Falls, and Diana Knapp, Rock Falls, were survivors of tragic suicides in their own families. They were looking for solace, for understanding, for support, and they wanted to offer a means of helping others who were confronting situations similar to their own. After all, they were both in the "helping profession" of nursing at CGH Medical Center, and recognized the potential benefits of bringing together local area survivors.

My wife and I began attending these monthly gatherings soon after our daughter died by suicide in 2002. We wanted to move forward on a path of healing and knew that it couldn't be accomplished alone or with a "quick fix."

Some people in the group wanted to reach a broader audience via outreach with a quarterly newsletter distributed not only to survivors but to interested individuals, local organizations and public agency offices as well. I had previous experience in producing newsletters and volunteered to be its editor. Thus, the initial issue of The Lighthouse was published in Spring, 2003. Now in its tenth year, and thirty-six issues later, the newsletter is thriving with a list of some 400 subscribers primarily in the three counties of Lee, Ogle and Whiteside.

The newsletter content includes editorials, recent news items and reports, announcements, historical accounts, poetry, book and video reviews, references and resources, and letters to the editor. The essential component of every issue is the stories of the survivors. These storytellers share their experiences with suicide of loved ones or friends, and what took place in their own lives. Sharing such stories takes a readiness as well as courage when revealing their thoughts and feelings. But we know the 'telling' can serve as a therapeutic balm for the writer and can provide solace for other survivors; and raise awareness and understanding for all readers.

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COMMENTARY ON VAN GOGH

Vincent Van Gogh died in 1890. He was only 37 years old when he took his own life.

(The Lighthouse, "Back in Time", Vol. 7, Issue 4, Spring, 2010).

It is rumored that Van Gogh's painting "Starry Night" was painted during his confinement in an asylum and that he sold only one painting during his lifetime as he was nameless at the time. That's perhaps what caused him to fall into an abyss of depression that eventually led him to suicide. How tragic for him to have felt so helpless and misunderstood in spite of being so gifted! It was a pity that medical science was not yet ready to help him.

Betsi McKay
Durham, NC

MURDER-SUICIDE IN ARIZONA

A former Neo-Nazi was the leader of a group of armed civilians actively patrolling the Arizona desert. The 'U.S. Border Guard' was looking for illegal immigrants and drug smugglers. Police believe "JT" was involved in murder-suicide; killing his girl friend before taking his own life.

From brief newspaper article, May 5, 2012

The Lighthouse is published quarterly at no charge. We welcome submission of news items, poems, reviews, and personal stories. Comments and suggestions to the editor are appreciated.

This newsletter is distributed in cooperation with Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Years ago my brother attempted suicide and it turned our world upside down. Thank G-d he was unsuccessful, but it definitely impacted my parents and, in a way, we could never have prepared for it. Even though it has been so many years ago, it is still fresh in our minds as if it happened yesterday.

Thank you so much for sending **The Lighthouse** newsletters. It's such a wonderful thing what you are doing and I can only imagine how many people you are helping.

Lisa Hergert
Loves Park, IL

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Suicide has recently touched the lives of very close friends of ours. The first lost one of his twin sons whose 23rd birthday was the day after the funeral. He was a college senior, a very bright young man full of promise. He actually kept a "suicide journal" discovered after the fact and had been writing about his suicide plans for several weeks. I had never heard of someone doing that, but maybe it isn't so unusual.

The other death was the son-in-law of dear friends here where we live. He was 45, leaving a wife and two kids...one starting college this fall. He had been a teacher and a coach and both of his kids were super athletes whom he loved to watch play. But he had decided to go into business with one of his brothers, and they weren't making it financially. Even so, no one saw it coming.

We are so grateful for your continued provision of this excellent resource ---**The Lighthouse**.

Lois Carlson
Lindsborg, KS

As we see it....continued from page 1

From the beginning, Sinnissippi Centers has had a strategic and supporting presence in maintaining the vitality of The Lighthouse. Initially, Nancy Caudillo provided advice and encouragement, and when she left Sinnissippi Centers her replacement, Greg Gates, continued that contact and relationship. In 2010 Greg left and Andrew Jackson became out talented advisor and enabler. Throughout the years we have been blessed with their professional excellence and creative effort in seeing that our newsletter met the standard of quality and relevance to the mission of Sinnissippi Centers. Thanks to these three professionals we have maintained a cordial working relationship. Also, we are grateful that the Board and Administration continues to provide for the printing and mailing The Lighthouse.

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SCHIZOPHRENIA AND SUICIDE: A FEW FACTS

- A professor of psychology at Mount Holyoke College believes that schizophrenia can result from trauma, abuse, and oppression. She doesn't even like to use the word. "I prefer to talk about 'anomalous experiences,' 'extreme emotions,' and 'emotional distress'." "Schizophrenia – that's just a technical name for a lot of complicated feelings."
- Many studies indicate that diagnosed schizophrenia patients have a high rate of suicide, up to twenty times that of the normal suicide rate in countries studied.
- Suicide is the number one cause of premature death among people with schizophrenia, with an estimated 10 to 30 percent killing themselves and approximately 40% attempting suicide at least once.
- Schizophrenia is the most persistent and disabling of the major mental illnesses. The term means 'split-mindedness,' it refers to a disruption of the balance among the mental functions: thinking, feeling, perception and behavior control.
- Studies have shown that 40 to 53 percent of people with schizophrenia have had suicidal ideation at some point in their lives, and 23 to 55 percent reported previous suicide attempts.
- Although genes influence the development of mental illness, they do not preordain it. Certain environmental conditions must also be present. It is considered to be highly heritable.

Cliff Knapp
Oregon, IL

Note: *Cliff's son was diagnosed with schizophrenia and took his life by ingesting too many aspirin.*

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

- ◇ **Heart attack, suicide risk rise after cancer diagnosis, study says**
April 5, 2012
- ◇ **Nevada's Suicide Epidemic April 24, 2012**
- ◇ **Army retools regimen for diagnosing, treating PTSD April 25, 2012**
- ◇ **TJ's Blues, A graphic memoir of teen depression May 9, 2012**
- ◇ **Where Arranged Marriages Are Customary, Suicides Grow More Common**
June 6, 2012