



Survivors Partnership for Research Information Truth and Education on Suicide

Survivor's Story...

By Sue Horvath

I have a wonderful story about the garden planted after our son, Alex, died from suicide on May 12, 2001.

Several weeks after a friend showed up with a box full of flowers and plants. She said, 'plant these if you want, if not, I still needed to bring them to you. They are to comfort you.' Well, I don't



remember planning, but I did. She told me the Clematis and roses would not bloom until the following summer.

I was in such profound grief all that summer and fall that I wished to die, and each day wondered how I woke up, I was sure the pain would kill me. I



began to pray that God would give me a sign that our Alex was at peace.

Well, my prayers were answered two weeks

before Christmas when I went to work that morning. I looked over at the patch of garden I had planted and my rose bush and clematis were in full bloom. I know, I thought the same thing; 'How is this possible?', but it

a cross, and a butterfly house have been added. Live birds, bees, ladybugs, butterflies and even dragonflies visit. We have a stone that was made especially for Alex, by a friend, there and we've added stones with 'Peace' and 'Courage'. The flowers have become more the wild varieties. Alex was a free spirit, so it fits.

When something isn't doing well, I know its time for something else to be planted. I will keep listening to Alex's garden and add, change, and take out as needed, but it's always a reminder that Alex is loved and missed every day and at Peace with God.

This was written in loving memory and honor of Alex's birthday, October 9. You will always be remembered for your smile, free spirit and warm,



loving arms.

was an answered prayer.

Over the years the garden has evolved and changed. Angels, butterflies, birds, bees, ladybugs, dragonflies, whirleybirds,

wonderful hugs. They were the best. We're sure you are dancing with angels and in God's

Message From the President

I am saddened as I write this as my mother just passed away on August 13th. She was fortunate to have lived a very long life, we just celebrated her 90th birthday in July with a surprise party for her. She was in good health, had her mind, and died peacefully. My biggest comfort is that I believe my son, Josh, met her and she got to hug her grandson.

There are a number of things happening with SPRITES, events, news. Be sure to read this issue and check the website for updates.

As always, we hope that SPRITES will be able to help you in your journey of healing, coping, remembering, and moving forward.

Lynn Fletcher

Sharing Corner

Survivors Helping Survivors

By Lynn Fletcher

A young couple, Jen and Ross, friends of mine who are like a daughter and son to me, recently got married. I was at their bridal shower in May. On the tables were little place cards stating 'in lieu of favors, the bridal party was making a donation to a worthy charity.' After opening her gifts, Jen stood up and read the following:

Thank you all for coming. I would like to briefly share a story with you all...

A few years ago the world lost a wonderful young man to suicide. His name was Joshua Mullen. Ross and I both knew him separately when we were growing up and we are both, now, still very close with his family. When the unthinkable happened, his mother, Lynn, looking for support, found SOS – Survivors of Suicide, where she met other survivors. Along their journey of healing, Lynn and her fellow survivors founded the SPRITES foundation – the Survivors Partnership for Research, Information, Truth and Education on Suicide – which, by the way, became a federally recognized non-profit organization last year!

Some of you may have heard me mention SPRITES, as I have walked, as a representative of the foundation, for the last couple of years, in the annual NAMI walk. Participating in just this small part of the organization, I have witnessed the incredible hope and determination of these survivors to really change things and help others. I especially admire



those, like Lynn, who, at what was likely the worst time in their lives, decided to use their loss and experiences to initiate these changes and make help available.

So, as you can see from the notes on your tables, rather than hand out plastic figurines or stuff you full of candy, we decided to donate that money to a deserving charity. So, on behalf of the

Schnelbach/Muzzio wedding party, I would like to present this donation to Lynn Fletcher, President of the SPRITES foundation.

Needless to say, I was in tears the entire time. My heart was touched deeply by the fact that 1) they were so touched by my son, Josh, 2) that SPRITES had made such an impression on Jen.

On behalf of myself and SPRITES I want to thank them for their thoughtful and generous donation to SPRITES Foundation:

- Jen (Schnelbach) and Ross Muzzio (Bride and Groom)
- Lesya Mazzoleni and Kirk Muzzio (Maid of Honor and Best Man)
- Shannon Papp and Frank Kodrich (Bridesmaid and Groomsman)
- Tina Mullen and Matt Mullen (Bridesmaid and Groomsman)
- Melanie Boehm and Kory Boehm (Bridesmaid and Groomsman)
- Moo Moo Muzzio (Flower Dog)

I shared this story with a dear friend of mine, who had lost her husband to colon cancer. She is having a baby shower for her daughter, and instead of favors for the guests, they are making a donation to the Colon Cancer Foundation. I think Jen has initiated a very good trend 'instead of favors' at showers!!

Craft Ideas

By Sue Horvath

For Children from 1 year to Elementary age

Rainy Day Treasure Chest:

- A decorative box or chest filled with crayons, washable markers, glitter pens, glitter glue, school glue, stickers, stampers, washable stamp pad, foam sheets and shapes, washable paints, activity books, coloring books, paint pages books, washable paint pallets, scribble pad, construction paper, child safety scissors, zigzag scissors, paper plates, ribbon, yarn, tissue paper, confetti.
- You now have an abundant supply of things for a rainy or snowy day, or when a child is ill. A laptop desk is also nice. Most of these items are at the dollar store, Walmart or Target type stores.

Halloween Mask (Or Make Believe Mask):

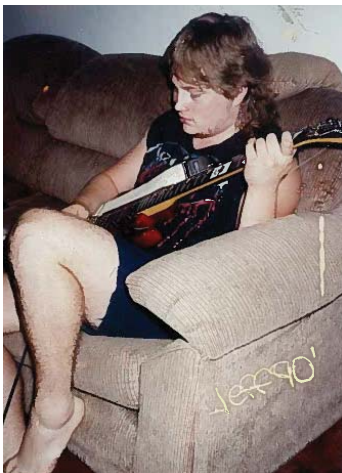
- Large paper plate
- Yellow tempera paint (washable paint)
- Popsicle stick or craft sticks
- Cut the paper plate into a sunflower, just zigzag the edges. Cut a hole in the center for the child's face. Lay on newspaper and paint. Glue the stick to the back. Dress the child in a sweatshirt, yellow to be part of the flower, green to be the stem.
- This is great for not only Halloween but any day of the year!

SPRITES Birthday Wall

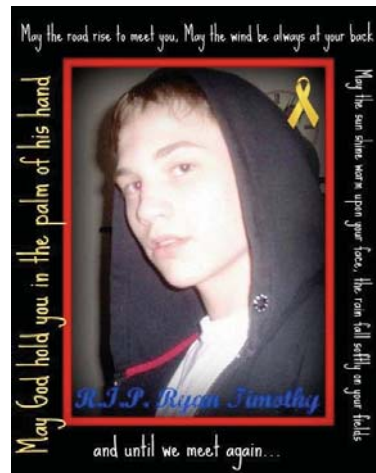
Paying tribute to our loved ones born between the months of July, August, and September



Jaime Kuskie-Kuzyck
July 12, 1977



Jeffrey Sedlak
August 23, 1993



Ryan Timothy Odes
September 21, 1991

If your loved one's birthday is in October, November, or December, please email their name, date of birth, and a picture to Sara at s.bainesmiller@gmail.com to be included in the next newsletter.

*Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday dear Jamie, Jeffrey, and Ryan.
Happy Birthday to you.*

2010 Ray Of Hope Walk

Submitted by Clare Vaill

Walking for Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Saturday, September 25, 2010 @ 11 am
@ Twin Lakes Park in Greensburg, Pa.

There will be a survivors gathering from 9 to 10 am with coffee and refreshments...a time to share memories and meet other survivors.

For more info contact Patrick Showman
@ 724-830-3617



NAMI Walk

Submitted by Susan Gorman.

Hello Friends & Family .

I am sending this out for a couple reasons. I am The Team Leader for the 2010 NAMI Walk (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

MY TEAM IS THE SPRITES!

We, the SPRITES, walk in honor of Our Loved Ones whom have left us from the Illness of Suicide. (In my case, my nephew Justin Wagner.)

There are many people who can help out there. So, we need to make sure people learn that it is OK to ask for help. It is an illness much the same as other illnesses. The difference is you cannot see it.

Please help "Stomp out the Stigma of Mental Illness", by Joining the "SPRITES TEAM" for the walk on **October 3, 2010**.

I have attached a couple web sites to look at and if you can join us for the walk. Sign up and we will keep you informed of our plans for the day.

<http://www.nami.org/namiwalks10/SWP/SusanGorman>
<http://www.namiswa.org/content/about/about.php>

I hope you can join us it really is a nice day to get out and walk before the winter hits.

Sue Gorman
SusanGorman@comcast.net

SPRITES Picnic and Mini Walk

Submitted by Susan Gorman.

This year we are adding a new aspect to our annual picnic: a 'mini-walk'. We will meet in North Park at Long View grove which is near the swimming pool at **12 noon on Saturday, September 18th**. We will walk as a group in the area and then start our picnic after the walk. As always, SPRITES will provide the main course and we ask that each person bring beverages and one of the following: side/dessert/snack-appetizer based upon the first letter of your last name as follows:

- A-H Appetizer
- I-P Side Dish
- Q-Z Dessert

We are asking if you would like/can, please get 'sponsors' for the mini-walk. Donations can be made out to "SPRITES Foundation" and are **tax deductible**. SPRITES plans to donate a portion of the donations to AFSP, American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, to continue to fulfill one of our goals of supporting other organizations in their research efforts on suicide. Even if you have no donations, that's ok too!! PLEASE join us in the walk and for the picnic, to be with others who understand.

Contact Elaine by September 15th at 412 486 8755 or eie908@gmail.com to let her know you will be attending. Hope to see you there!!!

Guest Speaker

Dr. Christina Smith will be the guest speaker at the SPRITES meeting Wednesday, November 15th, 2010. She is a psychiatrist at Allegheny General Hospital's Department of Psychiatry. Please come and hear her talk!

Penguin Tickets Raffle

Two Pittsburgh Penguin tickets have been donated to SPRITES to be raffled off sometime this season to benefit SPRITES. We will need as many people as possible to sell raffle tickets. There will be more information coming to you in emails! Help raise some money for SPRITES while promoting the Pittsburgh Penguins!

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Elaine Elderman

NAMI Walk

Sue Gorman

1st Responder Pamphlet

Ron Vaill

Grants

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2010 Calendar

Sat. Sept 18, 2010 - 12pm

SPRITE Picnic and Mini Walk

Sat. Sept 25, 2010 - 11am

Hope Walk

Sun. Oct 3, 2010 - TBA

NAMI Walk

Sat. Oct 9, 2010 - TBA

AFSP Walk

Thurs. Oct 21, 2010 - 7pm

General Meeting, NAMI Office

Mon. Nov 15, 2010 - 7pm

General Meeting, NAMI Office, Guest Speaker

Dr. Christine Smith

Wed. Dec 8, 2010 - TBA

Candle Light Memorial

SPRITES Mission

The mission of SPRITES Foundation is to provide support to individuals whose lives have been altered by the loss of a loved one to suicide, to instill a spirit of compassionate involvement with integrity, perseverance, determination, and knowledge through courtesy, respect, and leadership. SPRITES is also committed to reducing the stigma associated with suicide through supporting education of the general public about brain illnesses.

If you have or know someone who has lost a loved one to suicide please join fellow survivors for support, information and assistance in moving forward in the processing of this devastating occurrence. We currently meet at the NAMI Office, located at **105 Braunlich Drive, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15237** - just off McKnight Road in the North Hills (412-366-3788).

Explaining the Acronym of



Survivors **P**artnership - Survivors helping survivors
Research - Support research efforts
Information - For Survivors
Truth - Suicide is a medical condition
Education - Change the stigma associated with
Suicide



SPRITES Foundation
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