



Website: [www.sosbsa.org.au](http://www.sosbsa.org.au)  
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Springwood Qld 4127

*Caring, Support, Awareness, Education*

**Telephone Help Line 24/7: 1300 767 022**

**Issue No. 1**

**January / February 2013**

## My story so far...

-- Summer Mathison

*Some of you may remember Summer's story from our Facebook page. It touched so many of us online and Summer has graciously shared it again for us all here.*

I am 20 years old. 8 years ago I began 6th grade. That's when my life became too much. I was depressed for over a year and the first day of school I decided it was time. I couldn't handle the pain I endured; the bullying, the hurt of having a broken family, and the depression I was in. It was the only way I knew how to stop it. So I waited til my grandma fell asleep. I was barely hanging on when she found me the next morning. She was mad. Only 8 years later I realized she wasn't mad. She was shocked. I waited over a year for someone to help me. My grades became worse, I fluctuated with my weight, I became distant. I just didn't care. I thought this would open my teachers eyes how low I've gotten in life. They, along with my peers, looked down upon me. Even some wished I went through with it. I still deal with it today. I eventually helped myself out of depression. I carried on. There's days I think about it but I couldn't put my grandma through the pain again. Not after I learned my grandpa shot himself when my mom was little. Not after I realized how much she really loved me. There's days I become selfish but its not the way to go.

My life has been affected by other suicides and attempted suicides. I grew up and went to be an EMT. My first call was to someone I didn't know very well but I've seen him around. He put a gun to his head and blew away his life while his parents were gone. An hour after they left they came home to find their only son dead. He left a daughter behind. That was my first reality check. It dawned on me when I seen how struck they were. The air was cold as ice. You keep watching their chest in hopes its just a dream. I was never the same after that. But no calls compare to that one. That made me rethink real hard whether I wanted to keep pursuing that career. I had nightmares for months and I still do. He was a military personnel. They refused to bury him or make his death public.

*Continues on page 7...*

## 2013 Meeting Dates for the Annerley Support Group (Brisbane)

Friday fortnightly at 7:30pm

January 4, 18

February 1, 15 (8pm start after AGM)

March 1, 15



## Management Committee



**President:** Cherrie Cran

**Vice President:** Donna Cumming

**Treasurer:** Darrin Larney

**Secretary:** Jennifer McMahon

**Fundraising Coordinator:** Vacant

**Members:** Elna Rongonui & Mark Williams

## S.O.S.B.S.A. Support Group Meetings

### Brisbane Support Group

DrugArm Auditorium  
473 Annerley Road, Annerley (Cnr Fanny St)

Fortnightly from Friday 4th January 7:30 pm

Contact 1300 767 022

### Cairns Support Group

Cairns Red Cross, Douglas House  
198 Grafton St, Cairns

2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm.

Contact Fran on 4045 2955  
or 0407 695 891

### Bundaberg Support Group

Neighbourhood Centre  
111 Targo Street, Bundaberg

2nd Wednesday of every month at 10:30 am

Contact Peter on 4155 1015

### Mackay Support Group

Gordon White Library Meeting Room  
54 Phillip Street, Mt Pleasant, Mackay

2nd Saturday of every month at 2 pm

Contact Renee on 0412 448 805  
or Kim on 0430 186 149

### NEW BRANCH! Gladstone Support Group

The Gladstone Neighbourhood Centre  
105 Toolooa St, Gladstone  
2nd Thursday of every month 10am - 12pm

Lifeline, 25 Off St, Gladstone  
2nd Wednesday of month 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Contact Michaelle on 0413 121 512 or  
[gladstone@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:gladstone@sosbsa.org.au)

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### Annual subscriptions for SOSBSA 2013

Pensioner / Student	\$20
Adult member	\$30
Family	\$50
Not-For-Profit Org.	\$50
Affiliate Business	\$100

Visit [www.sosbsa.org.au](http://www.sosbsa.org.au) or contact [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) for membership form or to renew.

Memberships help pay for printing, copying, mailing and our telephone help line.

### SOSBSA PhoneLine

#### Volunteers WANTED.

We are looking for expressions of interest regarding volunteering for our 1300 help line for 2013.

Training will be provided.

Contact [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au) or 1300 767 022 for more information.

# President's Report

*Welcome everyone to our first newsletter for 2013. Here's hoping for each of you a year that will provide growth, healing, love and peace.*

I realised for myself at the beginning of the new year, how sad it is to be welcoming another year without my son, and it really doesn't get any easier. It's different, but not easier.

So, as we start the new year, maybe we could focus on some good memories and remember that our loved ones will always be with us in our hearts and our memories.

There are a few things happening in SOSBSA this year, and I'll share the most important here.

## Support Groups

With the beginning of 2013 for SOSBSA comes more opportunities for us to provide you with support. I'd like to remind you all that our support groups are there for you to attend at any time you feel the need to be around others who understand your grief, in an open non-judgemental environment where you are free to say what you want and to feel what you need to feel.

This year, our Brisbane support group will look at starting a second group, on the same night, and at the same venue, especially for young people under 25 who wish to share with each other their feelings, grief and to support each other. There won't be any formal changes occurring, just as they come, we will provide them with a separate group when possible.

## AGM 2013

In February on the 15<sup>th</sup> we will be holding our Annual General Meeting (see the advertisement on page 5). Further information has been mailed out in the post to all current members, and is available on our website [www.sosbsa.org.au](http://www.sosbsa.org.au) on the Events / Coming Up page. If you don't have access to the internet please feel free to contact us on 1300 767 022 and we will arrange for the information to be sent to you if you happened to miss out.

If you aren't a current member, you may have received a pack in the mail, or will receive it by email. Please consider becoming a member, and if you are able to contribute your time, we would welcome volunteers on the committee.

Whether you are a current member or would like to become a member, now is the time. If you are unable to attend the AGM, please feel free to send us your Proxy Appointment form, so that your vote can count.

## Help Line Phone

I'd like to pay special tribute to **Lynne** who has been looking after our phone for 2 days a week for a very long time. Lynne has come to a point in her life where she needs to stop taking these calls, and will no longer be available on the help line.



*Continues on page 4...*

# President's Report cont.

Lynne is an amazingly loving and supportive lady who is kind and generous with her time and concern for others who have suffered as she has. The Management Committee wish to say a **very big 'thank you'** to this special lady, and I'm sure many of you have spoken to Lynne or met her and know just how special she is, and how much we will miss her.

Lynne's parting means that I am looking after the phone on my own, which isn't always easy when I'm trying to work etc. So, we are calling for volunteers who might be interested in helping out on the phones (See ad on page 2). It doesn't matter where you live, just that you feel that you are at a stage where you will be able to help others who are travelling the same sad and painful journey that you are. Training will be provided, and you can take the phones as often as you like, with as little as one day a week.

## **New Branch - Gladstone**

Well as you will see in the newsletter, we have another branch in Gladstone. We'd like to welcome Gladstone to our fold, and wish them the very best for 2013 and beyond. Michaëlle (our new Gladstone facilitator) is enthusiastic and is doing an amazing job there. We are blessed to have her heading up our new Gladstone branch.

## **Events for 2013**

I'm sure that there are things that you would like to see us do during this year, and we will be endeavouring to plan many events. To help us figure out our calendar for the year, if you have any ideas, please let us know by using our contact page on the website, sending a message on facebook or email or phone. We'd love to hear from you.

*So, as we start 2013, we look forward to meeting many of you, and seeing you at our support groups and other functions.*

*All the very best at this time, take care of yourselves.*

Love and peace to all of you

*Cherrie*

## **Ways to Cope with Grief Individually at the Holidays**

Individuals who are bereaved may also need to be extra gentle with themselves during the holidays. The following are some suggestions:

- When others offer help, accept it. The holidays are a draining time of year for most people and those who are grieving are already short on energy.
- Think about your belief system. Is now the time to strengthen your ties to your religious community? Loosen your ties? Or perhaps change your beliefs so some extent to fit with any new lessons you may have learned from your grief.
- Take care of yourself. Avoid overindulgence in alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and sweets. Grief takes its toll on one physically, as well as emotionally. Try to avoid further stressing the body by eating nutritious food.
- Do something special for yourself. Buy yourself a gift in memory of your loved one, perhaps something you think they would want you to have. Pay someone to clean your house. Get a massage. See a good movie.
- Allow yourself time to cry.
- Allow yourself to be alone when you would like to be. Many people who grieve feel guilty about wanting to "cocoon" during the holidays, but it may be seen as a natural way of helping us slow down when grief is taking its toll on us.
- Decide with whom to spend your time. Spend time with those people who are able to be supportive. Decrease the amount of time spent with unsupportive friends and family.

From <http://www.helpstartshere.org/mind-and-spirit/grief-and-loss/grief-and-loss-tip-sheet-handling-grief-at-the-holidays.html>

# AGM

## Reminder Notice

We will be holding our AGM on  
**February 15th at 7pm.**

*DrugArm Auditorium*  
473 Annerley Road, Annerley (Cnr Fanny St)

Our regular support group meeting will follow after this at 8pm.

**All welcome. Come and get involved with how SOSBSA is run and help others.**

## Call for Stamp Donations.

Thank you to those kind people who have sent in a few unused stamps for us to use. It all helps to keep our costs down so we can use our valuable funds in other ways to support the bereaved.



If you have a few stamps you could send our way, please post to:  
**P.O. Box 334**  
**Springwood Qld 4127**

## Mourning Dove Pin



Purchase one of our beautiful pewter Mourning Dove pins to honour and remember your loved one.

Price: \$8 each (+ \$3 postage)

Please submit any orders & cheques either by mail to:  
P.O. Box 334  
Springwood Qld 4127

or by email to  
[secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au)

## THANK YOU

Thank you to **Maree Hart** for her generous donation of stamps to help with posting newsletters and information packs. Much appreciated.

XXXX



## ! A grief ago

'There is no grief  
which time does not lessen  
or soften' -  
so said Cicero, a man so often right;  
a Stoic, those for whom  
all life presents a lesson  
to be learned from,  
and then, to move on from..

But I wonder about all this:  
is grief ever lessened or softened?  
Is it not, perhaps, overlaid  
in our so various ways?

For some, grief framed and falsified  
to ease that grief;

For some, like hyacinths and crocus bulbs,  
left in a dark cupboard in the autumn of our grief  
to respond to time, and  
become at last  
themselves?

gently, gently, the covers pulled  
over the loving bed,  
the true, the pure, the lovely painful grief,  
the memory deep cherished,  
gently, gently, folded  
into the cupboards of the heart

there to be known, without the door disturbed  
until the time - 'a grief ago' as Dylan wrote -  
the cupboard opened only for love's sake  
without grief...:  
those carefully folded memories  
brought out and loved  
and lived a while...

not grief, not grief...but  
the pure memory of grief

and behold,  
life.

~Michael Shepherd

# Suicide support group set to help with loss of loved ones -- Tammy Lewis (*The Gladstone Observer*)



Photo by **Brenda Strong**

SUICIDE rates are particularly high in regional Queensland, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

For families who have lost loved ones, the pain is continuous and often people are unaware of the help available for them.

After losing her son to suicide in 2009, Michaelle Luijs recently started a group in Gladstone to offer peer-support for anyone who had lost a loved one.

The group, Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association Inc, had its first meeting in November.

Ms Luijs said she wanted to start the group to offer support to people. "It's not a professional service, it's just people who have gone through the same thing," she said. "I also understand that not everyone wants to come to a group, so they can phone up and have a one-on-one."

Ms Luijs said she truly believed Gladstone needed a group such as this. "Everyone can get support from each other and they have support groups down in Brisbane, and I thought why isn't there one here?"

"I'm not the only one whose lost someone to suicide and I thought we needed one."

Ms Luijs said she was thankful for the support she was getting from the SOSBSA group.

"They look after us. I wanted to do this but I didn't really know how to go about it."

## **Family members feel loss of loved ones from suicide deeply**

Psychologist and Compassion Coaching director Paul Stewart said people who were close to those who had committed suicide were affected deeply.

"And with that deep effect on their lives there's a lot of shame connected with it - maybe I should have seen what was going on, maybe I could have stopped it.

"As a life coach one of the ways in which I work is with this question, what is the opposite of depression?"

"Expression - usually there is stuff inside us that we don't believe we are able to express. It might be words, it might be purpose, it might be action.

"If we believe we are unable to express that stuff we tend to lock it up inside and that tends to shut us down, and depression is a result of that."

Beyondblue CEO Kate Carnell said it was essential for those who had lost loved ones to suicide to talk about it.

"Because the risk for them to commit suicide then increases dramatically," she said.

"There's nothing you could do. The important thing now is to look after your health.

"It's really important not to hide it. Get together and get through this."

*Reproduced in good faith via <http://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/suicide-support-group-help-loss-loved-ones/1699789/>*

# My story so far... -- *Summer Mathison*

*Continued from page 1...*

The second suicide I endured was a class mate of mine. I seen changes in him leading up to when he died. He was one of my bullies but a few months prior he stopped. He began defending me. Then one day he never came back. I couldn't believe how stupid I was to not notice til it was too late. He died 7 days before my uncle (my uncle died due to heart problems unexpectedly). A year later, his dad committed suicide in the same spot as his son. My heart broke for his mother, not only did she loose her only child, she also lost her husband.

My other uncle has had a hard time loosing his only brother. He's attempted quite a few times but he's always beat fate. Then one day he came to our door and he started crying and said he was ready to be with his brother. We called 911 and got him help. He blames me for stopping him. I live each day knowing I saved my uncles life but he regrets me doing so.

I know this is long already, but I don't care who you are, suicide isn't the way. God put you on this earth for a reason! Yes, what your going through may seem like a mountain at the time but when you get up on top of that mountain, its a beautiful view! Don't quit while your climbing to see that view!

I also encourage you to listen to R.E.M- Everybody Hurts. And those who lost someone also encourage you to listen to Rascal Flatts - I won't let go.

There's always a rainbow after the storm. You just gotta wait it through to see it.

Thanks for listening!

Be strong!

## ***For Grief by John O'Donohue***

When you lose someone you love,  
Your life becomes strange,  
The ground beneath you gets fragile,  
Your thoughts make your eyes unsure;  
And some dead echo drags your voice down  
Where words have no confidence.

Your heart has grown heavy with loss;  
And though this loss wounded other too,  
No one knows what has been taken from you  
When the silence of absence deepens.

Flickers of guilt kindle regret  
For all that was left unsaid or undone.

There are days when you wake up happy;  
Again inside the fullness of life,  
Until the moment breaks  
And you are thrown back  
Onto the black tide of loss.

Days when you have your heart back,  
You are able to function well  
Until in the middle of work or encounter,  
Suddenly with no warning,  
You are ambushed by grief.

It becomes hard to trust yourself.  
All you can depend on now is that  
Sorrow will remain faithful to itself.  
More than you, it know its way  
And will find the right time  
To pull and pull the rope of grief  
Until that coiled hill of tears  
Has reduced to its last drop.

Gradually, you will learn acquaintance  
With the invisible form of your departed;  
And when the work of grief is done,  
The wound of loss will heal And you will have learned  
To wean your eyes  
From that gap in the air  
And be able to enter the hearth  
In your soul where your loved one

# Introducing SOSBSA Gladstone

-- *Michaëlle Luijs*



Finally Gladstone Queensland has a much needed suicide survivor support group. It has taken months, after approaching various organisations without any luck. Then the Gladstone Regional Advisory Centre offered a venue, assistance and support in setting up the group, but even before our first meeting took place, the whole structure changed!

I got approached by SOSBSA to ask if we would like to be part of their association. What a wonderful offer and one we proudly accepted. It is a privilege to have the support and back up of such a professional and recognised organisation. So on Thursday 22 November 2012 (and then on every second Thursday of each month), we conducted our first meeting.

Sadly, in May 2009 I lost my son Kevin to suicide. It has taken a lot of support (ongoing), inner strength and pushing my own boundaries to get me where I am today. I know how important it is to have ongoing support. My journey has lead me on this path, to hopefully be able give back what I received. I feel it as a second chance to be able to try and support others on their journey and even to bring some awareness in the community on this devastating illness.

With love and strength to you all, Michaëlle.

X X X

*Thank you to all who attended our Christmas picnic 2012.  
It was a lovely day with beautiful people. Much love to all. ~xx~*





# Other Suicide Support Groups

*If you would like to add your suicide support group to this page, please email [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).*

## Sunshine Coast

### Head High Young People Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre  
Fifth Avenue, Maroochydore  
Linda —5479 0394

Meetings are held last Thursday of the month at 4:30 —6:30pm.

### Caloundra Living Beyond Suicide Support Group

42 Croydon Avenue  
Currimundi

Jeanine and Ron —5491 7452

Meetings are held every 1st Monday of the month at 10:00am-12 noon.



## Gold Coast

### Lifeline

2791 Gold Coast Road  
Broadbeach  
Monthly: 1st Friday of the month  
Time: 6:30-8:30pm  
Phone: 5579 6000

## Chermside

### Lifeline Brisbane North

766 Gympie Road  
Chermside  
Monthly: First Tuesday of each month  
Time: 6:00pm—8:00pm  
Contact: Lyndall Stafford  
Email: [enquiries@uccommunity.org.au](mailto:enquiries@uccommunity.org.au)  
Phone: 07 3624 2400



### Also

Lifeline facilitates an 8-week closed therapeutic group for the bereaved by suicide (daytime at Chermside and night time at Fortitude Valley).  
Contact: Lyndall Stafford at above phone number or email address.

## NSW

### Lifeline Harbour To Hawkesbury

4 Park Ave, Gordon, NSW  
Monthly: 2nd Thursday of the month 7-9pm.

Phone: 02 9498 8805

Email: [admin@lifelineh2h.com](mailto:admin@lifelineh2h.com)

### Lifeline MidCoast NSW

Sherwood Road Port Macquarie.



Meetings held on the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Contact Lee-Ann on 02 6581

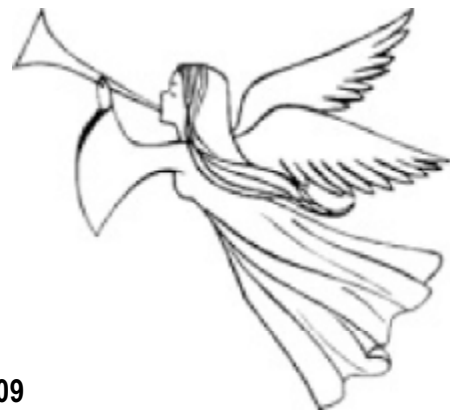
2800 or email

[lifematters@lifelinemidcoast.org.au](mailto:lifematters@lifelinemidcoast.org.au)

If you wish to receive this newsletter via email, please contact us on [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).

# In Memoriam

*If you would like an 'in memoriam', please send an anniversary record to SOSBSA, P.O. Box 334, Springwood 4127 or email to [secretary@sosbsa.org.au](mailto:secretary@sosbsa.org.au).*



Loved one lost to suicide: **Daniel Orr**

Your Name: **Michelle Sparkles**

Date of Birth: **5th July 1972**

Date of Death: **4th January 2009**

Message: **There are times when I am overcome with grief for your lost life, there are times when I remember you as smiling, funny and filled with joy. Your children miss you, I miss you. Peace is with you now. I will always remember and never forget. Your sister Michelle x x x**

Loved one lost to suicide: **Hayley Laws**

Your Name: **Jen McMahon**

Date of Birth: **8th September 1983**

Date of Death: **14th January 2009**

Message: **To my beautiful sister. I still, STILL can't believe, can't get over, that you are gone. I miss you every day, we all miss you so much and wish that you were with us. I hope that you have found peace and that I will see you again some day. Love you always 'Teen'.**

**For everyone whose anniversary of their loved one is in January / February.** On this anniversary of your loved one's death, may you remember the best experiences you shared, the most meaningful words that were spoken, the happiest moments you had together and the comfort that has given you the courage to go on.

## National Helplines

LifeLine: 13 11 14 (24 hour)

Mensline: 1300 789 978 (24 hour)

Suicide Callback Line: 1300 659 467 (24 hour)

National Hope Line: 1300 467 354 (24 hour bereavement support)

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800 (24 hour)

SANE Helpline: 1800 18 SANE (M-F 9am-5pm)

## QLD

Standby Brisbane 07 3250 1856

Standby Response Service 0438 150 180

(24 hour mobile crisis response to suicide bereavement.)

Sunshine and Cooloola Coasts 0407 766 961

Photo by Ian Britton