



# Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program

"Learn from this and help each other." —PS in Timothy McClelland's suicide note

## Newsletter

August 2006 ■ Volume 2, Issue 7

Bonnie McClelland, Chapter Director

Phone: 727.394.8222

Email: [Bonnie@SuncoastYR.org](mailto:Bonnie@SuncoastYR.org)

Website: [www.SuncoastYR.org](http://www.SuncoastYR.org)

### Notice of Monthly Meeting

Monday, August 14, 2006, 7 pm  
Seminole Community Library  
St. Petersburg College Campus  
9200 113th St. N., Seminole, FL 99772

Bonnie will be facilitating "Gatekeeper Training" this month. This is a FREE mental health first aid course. The purpose of the course is to teach the warning signs and risk factors, as well as coping skills and dos and don'ts, when faced with a loved one in crisis.

### Advance Suicide Prevention—SPAN USA Action Alert

It's time to start asking our legislators to support suicide prevention in FY 2007. Please take a moment to sign the petition on SPAN USA's web site. Then, send a message to everyone on your mailing list, no matter what state they live in, asking them to support suicide prevention. (Go to [www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org) and click on the link below "What's New? Around Town.")

While you're at it, check out the information on SPAN USA's 11th National Awareness Event, Suicide Prevention: Right Here, Right Now. Join Marlene Jehs, Evon Fales and Bonnie McClelland in Washington, DC, for the 2nd Annual Hike to the Hill and March to the Memorial.

### Urgent Request Made by Founder Reese Butler to Help Save 1-800-SUICIDE Hotline

I am writing to urge you to help the 1-800-SUICIDE hotline from being shut down.

The Kristin Brooks Hope Center, that runs the Suicide Hotline, is in jeopardy of being shut down because they can not pay the \$266,000 they owe in expenses, for services they already provided, that the federal government has not reimbursed them for.

Despite a government funded evaluation stating the benefits of the 1-800-SUICIDE hotline and the fact that almost 2 million callers have reached help and hope over the last 8 years, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), a division of Health and Human Services, has decided to create their own government-owned system where they would have direct access to confidential data on individuals in crisis.

This is a campaign where the online community can help generate support and awareness, and pressure the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), a division of Health and Human Services, to process this small non-profit's reimbursement from 2004. Readers and fans of [www.postsecret.com](http://www.postsecret.com) have already generated over \$30,000 to help the Hope Center pay off its April and May payments, but now they are facing June and July payments and still have received no help from the government.

**YOUR IMMEDIATE HELP IS NEEDED!**

Go to [www.save1800suicide.org](http://www.save1800suicide.org) and let the government know how you feel, then sign the petition.

### Notes From Bonnie

**Evening of Remembrance.** I want to thank everyone who participated this year and helped to make this event another success. We were blessed with a beautiful night under a full moon, with news coverage by Channel 10 and the Seminole Beacon.

**Quilt Square Reminder.** Quilt squares are needed ASAP. Please send an email to [bonnie@suncoastyr.org](mailto:bonnie@suncoastyr.org) and let me know if you are planning to contribute a square, but haven't finished it yet. You can find instructions for making a quilt square on our web site at [www.suncoastyr.org](http://www.suncoastyr.org), in our May 2006 newsletter.

**Contributions.** We've added PayPal to our web site, making it easier for contributors to support our suicide prevention efforts. The Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Program is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax-deductible.

**4th Annual Walk for Life.** Saturday, September 16, at Sutton Park in Palmetto. Registration is from 7-9 am. There will also be a butterfly release, lunch and entertainment. I've found the butterfly release to be very special and hope to share it with you this year. You can print a registration form from our web site at [www.suncoastyr.org](http://www.suncoastyr.org).

**I Am Alive by Jeff Shuck**

I may have lost my brother, my sister, my parent, my child, my spouse, my friend, but I am a survivor of the long dark night of unspeakable loss, the unbearable pain, of my own darkness... and I am alive.

I am unwilling to stand idly by and allow shame to defeat love, or silence to defeat action. I stand for the enlightenment of a society that would hide from suicide, that would avoid, that would pretend... and I am alive.

I am unwilling for my perseverance to be in vain, unwilling for the passing of my loved one to be in shame. I loved them more than I loved myself and their life will have meaning in my action. I am resolved... and I am alive.

In a world blinded by the pursuit of pleasure, I am here to say that people are in pain. In a world rushing to get ahead, I am here to say that people are being left behind. In a world obsessed with the value of the market, I am here to speak for the value of life... and I am alive.

This will be no quiet fight, for I am the voice of audacity in the face of apathy. I am the spirit of bravery in a world of action. I am a commitment to action in the face of neutrality.

I am out of the darkness; I am into the light. And, I am alive.

An Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide Awareness was held on the weekend of August 18, 2002, culminating in Washington, DC. The walk raised \$2 million for suicide prevention. This speech was given by Jeff Shuck, V.P. of Productions, at the opening and closing ceremonies

**Suicide Survivors Share Memories by Mary Burrell**

Survivors of suicide form a circle and hold up candles during the fifth annual Evening of Remembrance at Archibald Park in Madeira Beach July 9.

Photo by MARY BURRELL

MADEIRA BEACH—With a nearly full moon behind them and the sun setting on the horizon, a group of survivors of suicide—those who lost loved ones to suicide—gathered on the beach for a candlelight Evening of Remembrance July 9.

As beachgoers at Archibald Park respectfully watched, Bonnie McClelland of Seminole, co-founder of the Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program, guided the 35 survivors through an inspirational and emotional ceremony that included lighting each other's candles and honoring the memories of the teens who died and who clearly remain a big part of the lives of family members and friends.

As the participants gathered, they signed a banner that included notes to their loved ones, and they talked, sharing their pain with others who understood their loss.

McClelland founded the Pinellas County chapter after her son, Timothy, committed suicide at the age of 17. His farewell note, "Learn from this and help each other" has become the inspiration of the prevention program, which includes regular meetings at Seminole Community Library.

In Hillsborough County, Carol Yaros of Tampa co-founded the Suncoast chapter. Her son, Nicholas, was 15 when he died.

*Continued on page 3.*

Suicide Survivors Share Memories *continued from page 2*



Bonnie McClelland, founder of the Pinellas County chapter of the Suncoast Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program, blows bubbles on the beach during the Evening of Remembrance.

Photo by MARY BURRELL

Timothy and Nicholas' photos were displayed, as well as others', and the huge quilt that McClelland made in 2002, with 2332 yellow ribbons to represent the lives lost to suicide in Florida in that year. Since then, the different states' chapters have done the same thing, and others in the state have taken their turn in creating a quilt.

"I hope you can somehow find peace," McClelland said to those who gathered, as they cried and hugged each other for support.

This was the fifth annual Evening of Remembrance. There is a Yellow Ribbon event in October. The Yellow Ribbon program is focused on the prevention of teen suicide, the No. 3 cause of death for teens and the ninth leading cause of death for all ages in Florida.

I am only one.  
But still, I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
but still I can do something.  
And because I cannot do everything,  
I will not refuse to do  
the something that I can do.

— Edward Everett Hale

Taken from "A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul"

Want your name removed from our mailing list? Questions or comments? Problems receiving the newsletter?  
Send an email to [Bonnie@SuncoastYR.org](mailto:Bonnie@SuncoastYR.org) or call Bonnie at 727.394.8222.