

# *Newsletter of Hope*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE OLDER ADULT SUICIDE PREVENTION COMMITTEE



## *What's New*

TREAT YOURSELF TO  
SELF-CARE THIS  
HOLIDAY SEASON

SUICIDE AT THE  
HOLIDAYS

CHARITY FRAUD  
AWARENESS &  
PREVENTION

RESOURCES FOR ANY  
TIME OF THE YEAR

## *Staying Connected Through the Holidays*

The holidays are a prominent time in American culture as is evident by walking into any box store starting in September where you will find themed colors, decor, and music that 'get's you in the holiday spirit.' But, for many of us, the holidays can be lonely, can trigger feelings of grief, and overlook the cultural practices and spiritual days that are not a part of our culture's dominant narrative.

With our final newsletter of the year, our hope is to remind you that are not alone. Two main goals of this newsletter are (1) to tell stories we don't always hear but can relate to, and (2) educate the community about available resources to help stay connected. We hope it helps!

# ***Treat Yourself to Self-Care This Holiday Season***

**by Amy Goff**  
**Care Manager, Memory Care Specialist, Visiting Angels of SLO County**

We are getting ready to enter the busiest time of the year: the time when our holidays and our holy days can gang up on us emotionally and physically. We are busy and already have expectations of our time; the holidays just add to the list. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and is way too easy to put on the back burner or skip. We may also forget to take care of ourselves emotionally. Know that you don't have to exercise or recharge your spirit by yourself. Here are some of our favorite ways to stay connected while taking care of ourselves:

- Take your friends or loved ones along on your self-care adventure
- Take a walk in the leaves
- Dance to the carols on the radio
- Park a little farther from the store
- March in place during commercials
- Make time for 20 minutes of quiet
- Get on the floor and play with kids, grand kids, or your furry loved ones
- Add an extra worship service
- Go to a movie
- Take a coffee break with someone special
- Call your counselor, or an old friend!

It's OKAY and NECESSARY to make time for emotional and physical health while you are taking care of the extra obligations that this time of year brings.

Need more help or ideas? Call 211. They can help find resources for crisis, finance, clothing, food, healthcare, and housing & shelter.

Just remember to be as kind to yourself as you are to others!

# *Suicide at the Holidays*

by Michelle Call  
Executive Director of GALA Central Coast

My spouse always experiences depression as we approach the Christmas holiday. It's not just him, but the whole group of friends which formed in college and have kept in touch with each other. They talk about "dead Tony" -the one who is missing. Tony was a fan of the Grateful Dead, a social organizer, and someone whom they all respected and looked to. They knew he suffered from depression, but were shocked to find he had taken his own life.

It's now thirty years later, but the tragic shock of dead Tony's passing still affects those who loved him. My spouse's father passed away a few months ago - at the age of 86 after having traveled the world, earned five different degrees, and living exactly the life he wanted. There is sadness, but it was not a tragedy like dead Tony.

What can we do in circumstances like these to remember those who have taken their own lives but mitigate the effect on our own well-being?

**TALK-** Talk about it. Sometimes the stigma of suicide makes people reluctant to discuss what happened. There are mixed emotions and sometimes a feeling of responsibility that won't go away. Be open to what others need to express, and don't be reluctant to seek professional help if needed.

**BE PATIENT** - As in our tale, sometimes it takes a long time to process the grief of suicide. Set limits - say no to social occasions or people who won't be helpful, and allow yourself the space to experience whatever feelings may come.

**TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF** - Eat, drink, sleep - and socialize when it feels helpful. Exercise and stay away from drugs and/or alcohol which might delay you moving through the steps of grief.

You are never responsible for the suicide of another person. All we can do is move forward and remember the rich social interactions we had!

The holidays can be a difficult time, so please reach out to the resources in this newsletter, and to your friends and family if you are struggling!

# *Charity Fraud Awareness & Prevention*

**by Joyce Ellen Lippman**  
**Area Agency on Aging Direction 805-925-9554**

Throughout the year, and especially during the holiday season, we happily consider sharing and donating with our neighbors and community. We want to help those in need and be a caring community.

At the same time, scammers are hard at work to trick you. This is a great time to revisit some tips to ensure our donations are achieving our goals. Perhaps we want to reduce homelessness, reduce hunger, or increase companionship for isolated older persons.

Here are some tips to protect yourself against scammers:

- ✓ Do research. You can contact the Better Business Bureau at [www.give.org](http://www.give.org); check the Federal Trade Commission website at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov); read Guide Star ([www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)) or check with the IRS to see if your donation will be tax deductible.
- ✓ Be careful how you pay. The safest way to pay is by credit card or check. And keep a record of your donations and check to be sure what is charged is the amount you intended.
- ✓ Watch out for scammer tricks. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift cards, or by wiring money, please reconsider. That is how some scammers will ask you to pay. And, don't let anyone rush you to pay - this is also a common practice of scammers.
- ✓ Check the name of the charity. It is popular for scammers to slightly adjust the name of a charity to look like the names of real charities.

There are many worthy organizations who will use your donations wisely. I suggest you follow your heart with your donations, but use your brain power to make the final decision.

## Friendship Line

*Brought to you by the Institute on Aging*

Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line is the only accredited crisis line in the country for people aged 60 years and older, and adults living with disabilities. They also make on-going outreach calls to lonely older adults. While there are other organizations that respond to the needs of people who may be contemplating suicide, none provides the type of services that Institute on Aging's (IOA) Friendship Line offers to respond to the public health problem of suicide among the elderly.

Knowing that older people do not contact traditional suicide prevention centers on a regular basis even if they are considering suicide, IOA created the only program nationwide that reaches out to people experiencing loneliness, depression, isolation, and who are frail and/or suicidal. Their trained volunteers specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation with older adults experiencing depression.

**TOLL FREE - 800-971-0016**

### **The Friendship Line provides round-the-clock crisis support including:**

- Provides emotional support
- Elder abuse reporting
- Well-being checks
- Grief support through assistance and reassurance
- Active suicide intervention
- Information and referrals for isolated older adults, and adults living with disabilities

• For more information, visit [ioaging.org](https://ioaging.org)  
or call 415-751-4111



# *Grief at the Holidays*

Seasonal depression is a real diagnosis that often occurs during the winter months when people tend to be in the sun less and, due to weather and other circumstances, house-bound. We also know that feelings of grief can spike during these months, too. When we lose loved ones to any type of death, and especially suicide, the holiday season can be an unintended reminder that our loved one is no longer with us.

We want to share a friendly reminder that there are support resources available to you throughout the county.

## SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

**Next Meeting: November 27, 2019 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm**

**Meets second and last Wednesday of every month in San Luis Obispo**

This Suicide Bereavement Support Group is for those left behind after someone important to them completed suicide.

Visit [hospiceslo.org/support-groups](https://hospiceslo.org/support-groups) to find out more information

## *Transformational Abundance*

This support group meets at the Nipomo Library and is for adults age 18 & over. The next meeting is December 7th from 4:00pm-5:00pm and December 21st, 12:00noon-1:30pm.

Visit [transformationalabundance.com](https://transformationalabundance.com) for more information



# *Light Up A Life*



Join Hospice of San Luis Obispo County in remembering loved ones during their 35th annual Light Up A Life season. The lantern symbolizes light as we are guided through life's journey. There are three ways to support Hospice of SLO County and illuminate the memory of your loved one, honor someone living, or simply elect Hospice of SLO County for your end-of-year giving. With your help, lights will shine during their Light Up A Life season.

As a volunteer hospice, Hospice SLO County does not charge any fees for the services they provide. For 40 years, they have relied on the generous support of the community to continue their work to address the emotional, social, and practical needs of those coping with a life-threatening illness or grieving the death of a loved one. To learn more about Hospice of SLO County or the Light Up A Life ceremonies, visit [hospiceslo.org](http://hospiceslo.org).

## 2019 Light Up A Life Remembrance Ceremony Schedule:

### **Pismo Beach**

Sunday, December 1, 4:00pm  
at Shore Cliff Hotel

### **San Luis Obispo**

Tuesday, December 3, 5:00pm  
at Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa

### **Paso Robles**

Thursday, December 5, 6:00pm  
at City Park Gazebo

### **Atascadero**

Friday, December 6, 6:00pm  
at Pavilion on the Lake

### **Nipomo**

Monday, December 2, 5:00pm  
at Kaleidoscope Inn

### **Morro Bay**

Wednesday, December 4, 6:00pm  
at Coalesce Bookstore

### **Arroyo Grande**

Friday, December 6, 6:00pm  
at Heritage Square Park

### **San Luis Obispo**

#### **"Paws To Remember"**

Pet Peace of Mind Ceremony  
Monday, December 9, 6:00pm  
at Hospice of SLO County Office