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Loving
Outreach
to Survivors
of Suicide

The LOSS Program
Loving Outreach
to Survivors of Suicide

Catholic Charities of the
Archdiocese of Chicago
721 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654
(312) 655-7283
catholiccharities.net/loss

Lost and Found

Karen M. Kelly

It's been four years since my beloved son, my only child, took his own life. A tenured professor with nine books and hundreds of articles to his name, he was a respected teacher and international consultant on academic issues. A family man with a wonderful wife and three teen boys, he was healthy and strong and fit. He even ran marathons — 19 of them.

But though it is still incomprehensible, I lost him to pains I did not know or recognize.

The world then was a barren, hopeless, dark place — until a university colleague of his told me about LOSS (Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide). It was high COVID-19 time, when personal meetings and actual contacts were rare, so I would be meeting via computer.

I certainly had my doubts. How could LOSS help me? Survivors were bedraggled people on tiny islands with only a tree for company, talking to volleyballs.

I soon acknowledged that I was in fact a survivor, a castaway — someone lost and not likely to be found. Not yet dead, but not really alive, either. Where could I look for help or rescue? Was anyone even looking for me?

The answer was quick and positive. LOSS members and staff reached out to me and helped me know I was not alone, that I was understood. LOSS works by letting us find other survivors — not easy work, but it made me stronger.

That word “survivor” that was once a badge of shame and sadness became a way to reach out to others. There is honor and truth in being a survivor, and even power.

My being helped and healed has led to my being able to share that understanding with my beloved grandsons. I feel confident that this sharing has been of benefit to them as they navigate life without their dad.

Because of LOSS, I have met many fine people with whom I can share my deepest feelings, and LOSS gives me opportunities to help others as I have been helped. Because of LOSS, I am alive and able to experience joy and wonder in the world. I survive, and I can accept love and loss and life again.

Karen Koko Kelly is a lifelong Chicagoan who has worked as a journalist, freelance writer/editor, and public relations executive. Now retired, she is focused on family and trying to read all the great new books as well as the classics.

OBELISK

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Founder & Director

Deborah R. Major
Director

Cynthia Waderlow
Child Therapist

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Catholic Charities partners with mission-driven people and organizations across Cook and Lake Counties to witness a message of mercy and hope to a world in need. We are called to serve and accompany anyone, regardless of their faith, gender, race, or ethnicity.



Memorial Squares *and* Lifekeeper Quilts

Over the decades, LOSS members have created quilt squares that have been sewn into 24 memorial quilts. In each issue, we print the names of those who are memorialized on two of the LOSS Lifekeeper Quilts. We also display quilts at LOSS special events, including the Blossoms of Hope Brunch in April and the Evening of Remembrance in November. We encourage LOSS members to consider creating a quilt square.

We are displaying Lifekeeper Quilts in the St. Louise de Marillac Chapel at the Catholic Charities central office at 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Ill. 60654.

Currently on Display at Catholic Charities: Quilt #12

Amy Calvin	1/11/1968	7/6/1994
Stuart Fitzgerald Coy	11/22/1963	12/1/1992
Robert A. Diaz, Sr.	2/20/1976	9/9/1997
William Brian Elliot	2/11/1965	7/5/1998
Patrick Fleming	1970	1987
Jason Bruce Howell	5/17/1971	3/13/1990
John W. Kelly	6/20/1914	8/17/1984
Thomas J. Larsen	1/21/1923	5/4/1989
Theresa C. Nash	10/1/1960	4/30/1984
Robert Peter Plemel	1/13/1972	10/7/1995
Mary Powers Young	7/18/1959	5/29/1990
Timothy John Reinbold	11/14/1961	3/30/1990
Refugio Rodarte	1962	1984
Mark A. Saber	1963	1983
John C. Scanlon	8/27/1959	1/21/1998
Joe Westphal	12/13/1962	1/4/1997
Ramona Lee Williams	10/18/1933	8/4/1998

Quilt #24

Angela Ellis	8/9/1994	7/7/2022
Erik	4/9/1990	9/27/2014
Heidi Shor	9/16/1965	3/17/2022
Natalie Hiatt	10/20/2004	4/10/2022
Tammy Scribner		
Mary Ellen Spence	10/16/2001	7/24/2021

Quilt Square Guidelines

Cut a piece of material (heavy cotton materials suggested) to a 12" X 12" square. You can be as creative as you like (many people add pictures and messages). Leave 1" X 1" along the sides so the squares can be sewn together. When finished, mail your quilt square to: LOSS Quilt Project, c/o Catholic Charities, 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654.

From the Desk of Jessica Mead

We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason, it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others. — Dalai Lama

It's because of our meaningful and intimate connections that we grieve so deeply when someone dies by suicide. Someone who can bring us so much joy can cause us such pain, and ultimately, our bonds and intimate relationships are what will heal and comfort us.

After losing someone, it's normal to worry about the safety of others, and we often find ourselves thinking more about death in general. Many have never had to face such a devastating loss or more specifically, deal with suicide loss (which can feel so different). When I lost my dad, I hated that I thought about the possibility of other people dying. I liked my previously blissful state of ignorance to issues of mortality. Even many years after the death of my dad, the thought of someone else I love dying or taking their life feels like an intrusive and intolerable thought that I need to dismiss quickly. Many of us may tread lightly when entering into new relationships and find it easier to live in isolation than to risk loving someone so deeply and then risk the possibility of losing them. I have thought about how the more I love, the more at risk I am for loss. I remind myself that pain and joy, love and sorrow come hand in hand, and to have joy and love, I must be willing to risk pain and sorrow.

What makes suicide loss complicated is that grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide often feels very lonely. It can feel lonely because many don't want to talk about it for fear of being stigmatized, and others may feel like they have to defend the character of the person who died. Many survivors feel like people do not respond appropriately or that they just "don't get it." Grieving can be a self-centered process because the pain can be so consuming that one has little space for anything else. Many survivors state that it can take all of our being just to survive in the moment. One may be able to go to work or to run a small errand, but hearing someone talk about their bad day or helping with a child's homework can sometimes seem intolerable. Other survivors may find themselves getting angry when hearing about someone else's insignificant work issue or complaint about a living partner or child. With this amount of pain, it's hard to empathize with other people or think that their issues even matter comparatively. I sometimes heard LOSS members in our groups speak about avoiding certain people and situations because they just didn't have the mental space to cope with other people's "small problems." Grief can be a lonely place. Many LOSS members have wonderful, patient friends and family who are able to weather the storm, but others do not. In my years with the LOSS program, I learned that the people who were able to transform and heal after such a tragedy were people who felt connected and supported by others.

From the moment we are born, we are connected to another human being. As infants, we survive and thrive as a result of that attachment.

As we develop, we are constantly forming new relationships and creating our identity based on how these relationships make us feel. Being connected to other people and living things is what makes us human. What we know about grief and healing from any tragedy is that other people are vital to our healing. We need others to support us psychologically, emotionally, and physically when we do not have the space to do these things for ourselves. It's through these connections that we are going to laugh for the first time after the loss, and through these connections we can begin to repair and renew our broken selves. Feeling connected is not just about having supportive friends and family; it can be about feeling connected to other living things like a beloved animal or nature, feeling attached to a certain author or blog writer, or having a sense of community and being part of something bigger. LOSS can provide survivors with a sense of community. I often heard the phrase, "I am now part of the club that no one ever wants to join." Many times, survivors talk about the powerful feeling of just walking into the room of one of our support groups. This powerful feeling of connectedness can be bigger than words or hugs; people just know that they are amongst understanding and empathic people. Even the Obelisk provides a sense of connectedness and community to survivors in Chicago and all over the country. Hundreds of other survivors can be validated through the same story or article. Just knowing that another person has gone through something similar can be comforting.

| continued on page 4

From the Desk of Jessica Mead | continued from page 3

On April 26, 2026, LOSS will host its 35th annual Blossoms of Hope fundraiser. Words cannot describe the intense feeling of walking into the ballroom to join hundreds of other survivors, people all there to honor their loved ones who died, and to celebrate the renewed hope in their own lives.

I hope that in those moments when you find yourself feeling isolated, that you can reach out to an old friend or family member, a therapist, or the LOSS program. Taking this step of actively seeking out another person can be a turning point in your grief. If you are not able to do any of these things, know that as you read this issue of the *Obelisk*, there are hundreds of other survivors who are already bonding with you at this very moment.



Jessica Mead is a therapist with a private practice in Chicago. For several years, she was a therapist with LOSS and the LOSS Program Intake Coordinator. Jessica can be reached for therapy or consultation at JMMcounseling.com.



In the winter of 1979, Rev. Charles T. Rubey met with three couples, Joe and Elsie Settanni, Bill and Marie Churchill, and Carol and Ernie Fluder, to offer compassion and support after they lost a child to suicide. In the late 1970s, suicide was very poorly understood and there was no organized support for families experiencing this traumatic loss, leaving many survivors in the Catholic community feeling ostracized. This was Father Rubey's first grief support group, and the three couples eventually came to be known as the founding families of the Loving Outreach to Survivors (LOSS) Program. One group led to a second and third, as word spread across the Chicago metropolitan area that there was acceptance and hope for those who had lost loved ones to suicide.

Father Rubey has dedicated his career to fighting the stigma associated with suicide. Over the decades, he has worked to expand the services and the reach of LOSS, bringing survivors together in small groups to form communities of caring and support. Today, LOSS offers individual counseling, in-person, and online support groups, a free newsletter, psychoeducational presentations about suicide bereavement, and parish and community debriefings in the aftermath of a suicide.

Over the years, the Charles T. Rubey LOSS award has been presented at the Blossoms of Hope Brunch to educators, researchers, and many individuals who have created programs to support survivors or develop new prevention strategies. This year, Father Charles T. Rubey will receive the award named in honor for his decades of service to survivors of suicide loss.



*blossoms of hope
brunch*

Please join us for the Blossoms of Hope Brunch,
benefiting the Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide
(LOSS) Program

Sunday, April 26, 2026

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Westin Chicago Lombard
70 Yorktown Center | Lombard, IL**

Questions and sponsorship inquiries:

Please contact Ruth Igoe, Director, Major Giving
(312) 655-7556 or rigoe@catholiccharities.net



catholiccharities.net/events/blossoms-of-hope-brunch-2026/



blossoms of hope brunch

Sunday, April 26, 2026 | 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Westin Chicago Lombard | 70 Yorktown Center, Lombard, IL

2026 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PLATINUM SPONSOR | \$15,000

- Three tables of 10 guests
- Recognition throughout event and on website and social media
- Remembrance card on 3 table centerpieces
- Full-page ad in the program book

GOLD SPONSOR | \$10,000

- Two tables of 10 guests
- Recognition at event and on website and social media
- Remembrance card on 2 table centerpieces
- Half-page ad in the program book

CENTERPIECE SPONSOR | \$7,500

- Two tables of 10 guests
- Recognition at event and on website and social media
- Recognition at each table

SILVER SPONSOR | \$5,000

- Two tables of 10 guests
- Recognition at event and on website and social media

BRONZE SPONSOR | \$2,500

- One table of 10 guests
- Recognition at event and on website and social media

WINE GRAB SPONSOR | \$1,000

- Two tickets to event
- Recognition at event and on website and social media
- Recognition at Wine Grab table

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS | \$80

QUESTIONS?



Ruth Igoe
Director, Major Giving
rigoe@catholiccharities.net
(312) 655-7556



Supporting Children with Complicated Bereavement

Cynthia Waderlow, MSE, LCSW

The grief process for adults who experience suicide loss usually involves a lengthy focus on the relationship with the person who died. This relationship may have been strained by difficult life circumstances: perhaps mental illness, divorce, substance use, physical or emotional abuse, a history of deceit, gambling or other financial misuse. These associations with the deceased may lead to complicated grief. Adults often struggle to understand mental disorders, personality disorders or co-dependence operating in the relationship, while mourning the loss of hope, and trying to assess the loved one's potential and vulnerability when they were alive. Healing from this kind of complicated grief is layered work requiring time and perspective, as well as careful, honest reflection.

When children grieve a sibling or parent who harmed them physically or emotionally, their grief is no less challenging. However, young children are limited in processing complicated grief by concrete thinking, potential trauma, self-blame, and understandable avoidance. Attachment to the deceased becomes ambivalent and confusing.

I recall one adolescent girl who had been abused by her stepfather. The secrecy that surrounded this experience led her to feign emotions after his suicide as if he had been a nurturing figure. Another set of siblings witnessed domestic violence against their mother, and after their father's suicide they presented as if there had been no suicide, no death. Other, younger children, saw a pattern of anger and meanness, as well as substance abuse in their father, and

expressed both mad and sad feelings; quite impressive given their age and ability to acknowledge that they were sad for what might have been different, what they had wished for.

Children with such grief experiences carry a burden that is an extension of the shame, fear, and embarrassment they experienced while the parent was alive. It is safe to say that children build social identities on family security, and confidence is easily impaired when this is absent. Adding suicide and bereavement can increase the sense of being different, being wrong and embarrassed, and children may avoid sharing this part of grief with the surviving parent.

Complicated grief with mixed emotions is actually quite common. The process of healing from it involves challenging work, and still, the heart of grief is love and longing, accessible in moments and memories. Children typically let us know about their longings, and after loss we can help them to express what they wanted from the deceased family member in particular situations and in small doses. "I wanted my dad to not be drunk on Christmas. I wanted my mom to wake up when I came home from school. I wanted my brother to stop making fun of me. I didn't want to be yelled at." A therapist or a parent can help children to expand their thoughts by sharing alternative wishes such as presence, safety and calm, affection, gentleness... All in their own words and descriptions.

We must allow sufficient time for children to process complicated grief, to show them how to speak for themselves about what they needed

then and what they need now. Bereaved children can do this across development into adulthood at times that offer reflection or when a memory is triggered. With gradual maturity, children may invoke sympathy for the disturbance and dysregulation shown by the deceased person, or they may not. What we encourage are small experiences of empowerment as they assess the hurtful actions as harmful and unfortunate. Every loss and grief is unique. We want to offer opportunities for genuine thoughts and feelings to be expressed and processed at a capacity that is normal for the child.

One of two siblings, 8 and 10 years old, drew a picture during their LOSS session of their dad at the barbeque grill. This was an unpleasant memory because their father was often intensely annoyed, perhaps in this case, having experienced a burn. Included in a word balloon the child wrote strong curse words. In another drawing, Dad was relaxing in a chair, and the siblings were cooking and everyone was smiling. This is what they longed for, not just for themselves but for their deceased father. Here, what they really longed for was validated, and they were able to offer him a vicarious sense of peace.

While traumatic associations are best treated by a professional, with support and modeling, parents can show and explain how the person who died struggled and hurt others in the process. We can help children identify when the deceased demonstrated affection while validating that the affection was uneven because of mental illness or addiction.

Supporting Children with Complicated Bereavement | continued from page 6

Children can recall negative memories associated with any attachment figure, but when stress or fear has characterized the relationship, and this is added to their maturing grasp on the adult's mental illness, depression and suicide, we can appreciate how long this may take to resolve. Child therapy, grief camps, books, and an abundance of non-intrusive curiosity and presence on the part of a surviving parent can offer children opportunities to grieve, make sense of their experience and heal. We must always start with what is and take small steps, prioritizing the needs of each child.

Announcements

In case of severe weather, please email loss@catholiccharities.net to ensure that meetings will be held as scheduled.

At Peace Memorial

Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums, Hillside, Illinois

A collaboration between Catholic Cemeteries of Chicago and the LOSS program of the Archdiocese of Chicago has resulted in the construction of a first-of-its-kind memorial for survivors of suicide loss at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums in Hillside that we hope will bring some peace and healing to those who have been impacted by suicide. We are waiting for the arrival of special artwork created for the memorial. Once the artwork has been installed, and pending suitable weather, we will invite everyone to join us at Queen of Heaven Cemetery for a special dedication service. We anticipate a dedication service in May of 2026.

LOSS Program 8-Week Groups

LOSS offers 8-week groups on a rolling basis throughout the year. Readings and other resources are provided. Participants are asked to commit to attending all 8 sessions to build and maintain group cohesion. If you would like to join the list for an upcoming 8-week group or want additional information, please contact us at loss@catholiccharities.net or (312) 655-7283.

Men Are Suicide Survivors (MASS) Men's Group

MASS is for men who have lost a family member or friend to suicide. We offer a confidential setting to talk about your experiences and learn how others have dealt with similar situations. The next meeting is **Monday, March 16, 2026, at 7 p.m.** at Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois. To register, contact Bill Teskoski at wteskoski@sbcglobal.net or (312) 560-3119.

Pastoral Support

Father Rubey, and Deacon Jesus Casas, pastoral care liaison for LOSS, are available to say home Masses, perform blessings, offer prayers and provide counsel around questions of faith following a suicide loss. Contact loss@catholiccharities.net or call (312) 655-7283 to learn more.

STAR Group for First Responder Families

STAR is for family members of police officers and firefighters who have died by suicide. You will be in the company of other first responder families who understand the unique stress faced by your loved one. To receive the zoom link or for more information, contact Alicja Bochenek-Schultz at abochenek@catholiccharities.net or (773) 739-4341.

Blossoms of Hope Brunch Planning Committee Needs You!

Are you interested in volunteering to help promote the LOSS **Blossoms of Hope** brunch scheduled for Sunday, April 26, 2026? The brunch planning committee is looking for new members to plan and promote the event across your social networks. If you are interested in joining us, please contact loss@catholiccharities.net or Cristin Clifford at cclifford@catholiccharities.net.

Would You Like to Support the LOSS Program Financially?

There are several ways to do that. If you would like to make an online donation, please visit catholiccharities.net/give/donate-form/. At this site, please click "Other Designation" and then type "LOSS Program" in the box that asks where you want your donation to be applied.

If you prefer to mail a check, checks can be mailed to our secure bank lockbox. Please make your check payable to the LOSS Program and mail it to:

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
PO Box 7154, Carol Stream, IL 60197-7154

We thank you in advance for your generous gift.

LOSS Support Group Update

Our in-person groups are held in the following locations: **Downtown Chicago** (721 N. LaSalle Street, 7th Floor), **Marist High School in Chicago** (4200 W. 115th Street), **St. Joseph's Church in Wilmette** (1747 Lake Avenue), **St. Francis de Sales Church in Lake Zurich** (135 South Buesching Road), **St. Joan of Arc Church** (820 Division Street, Lisle), **St. John the Evangelist Church Narthex** (10701 Olcott Avenue, St. John, Indiana).

March 2026 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group
 March 5, 2026; 7 p.m.
 St. John the Evangelist,
 St. John, Indiana
 Group meets in Church Narthex
 Facilitators: Steve Costa,
 Jim and Kris Kazmierczak

2nd Monday Group
 March 9, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Jeannette Scalise
 and Kerry Hamill

3rd Wednesday Group
 March 18, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales,
 Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitator: Sandy Bourseau

3rd Thursday Group
 March 19, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitators: Kathleen Sergent
 and Lance Beigh

4th Tuesday Group
 March 24, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Barb Murphy and
 Patty LaPorta

4th Sunday Group
 March 22, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Marion Kahle
 and Lori Grennon

Online

2nd Tuesday Group
 March 10, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim and Tina Kranz

3rd Tuesday Group
 March 17, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Patty LaPorta and
 Tish Guinter

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group
2nd Wednesday
 March 11, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
 Facilitator: Eileen Hurn

Parent Support Group
3rd Thursday
 March 19, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Mary and
 Mark Edwards

Spanish-Speaking Group
2nd Tuesday
 March 10, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda DeLeon

STAR Group for first responder families
1st Tuesday
 March 3, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
 Facilitator: Tish Guinter

April 2026 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group
 April 2, 2026; 7 p.m.
 St. John the Evangelist, St.
 John, Indiana
 Facilitators: Steve Costa, Jim
 and Kris Kazmierczak

2nd Monday Group
 April 13, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Cherie Emling
 and Eileen Hurn

4th Tuesday Group
 April 28, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitator: Katy Wertz

3rd Wednesday Group
 April 15, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales,
 Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitator: Sandy Bourseau

3rd Thursday Group
 April 16, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitators: Kathleen Sergent
 and Lance Beigh

4th Sunday Group
 April 26, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Katie Graff and
 Merle Cowin

Online

2nd Tuesday Group
 April 14, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim and Tina
 Kranz

3rd Tuesday Group
 April 21, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Tish Guinter and
 Cherie Emling

Special Interest

Spousal Group
2nd Wednesday
 April 8, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
 Facilitator: Eileen Hurn

Spanish-Speaking Group
2nd Tuesday
 April 14, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda De Leon

Parent Support Group
3rd Thursday
 April 16, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Jim Lampa and
 Lori Grennon

STAR Group for first responder families
1st Tuesday
 April 7, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
 Facilitator: Tish Guinter

To register for any group or event, call (312) 655-7283 or email loss@catholiccharities.net

LOSS WEATHER LINE

In case of severe weather, please email loss@catholiccharities.net to verify that meetings will be held as scheduled.



Upcoming May 2026 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group

May 7, 2026; 7 p.m.
St. John the Evangelist,
St. John, Indiana

2nd Monday Group

May 11, 2026; 6 p.m.
Downtown Chicago

3rd Wednesday Group

May 20, 2026; 6 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales,
Lake Zurich

3rd Thursday Group

May 21, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc Church, Lisle

4th Tuesday Group

May 26, 2026; 7 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago

4th Sunday Group

May 24, 2026; 6 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

May 12, 2026; 7 p.m.

3rd Tuesday Group

May 19, 2026; 6 p.m.

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
May 13, 2026; 7 p.m.

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
May 21, 2026; 6:30 p.m.

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
May 12, 2026; 6:30 p.m.

STAR Group for first responder families

1st Tuesday
May 5, 2026; 6:00 p.m.

A Prayer for Survivors

—*Therese Gump*

Lord, I need your help to survive,

A part of me's gone, but I'm still alive.

Let me not be obsessed with "if onlys" and "whys"

Only you know the reason that somebody dies.

I must take time to weep, and smile when I can,
And not be concerned with the judgments of man.

Can I learn how to numb the everyday pain,

So the hollow inside me will not remain?

May I substitute goals for my feelings of guilt,

And not be ashamed of the life I have built.

Make me believe that the sadness will pass,

That joy will return to my being at last.

Finally, show me the way to reach others like me.

Then I'll know my survival was destined to be.



*The Obelisk Publishing Fund
provided in memory of*

Brett J. Innocenti

*The Obelisk Postage Fund
provided in memory of*

John Joseph Carroll

Isabella Kusiak

Michael Robert Dady



Mention My Name

Michael Robert Dady

10/4/1996 — 3/11/2014

*We miss you and dad so very much!
Mom and Joseph*

Erik A. Barillari

9/1/1995 — 3/14/2019

*We miss you more than you ever
could have imagined.
You were an amazing son and
brother.
All our love, Mom and Caitlin*

David Alan Louis Roy II

*I can't believe how I have made it
without you or your love.
I miss you, David. My heart will
never be whole.
Another first-place mom*

Toni Mannella

3/28/1992 — 1/30/2019

*Your life was short; you have
touched so many lives and continue
to touch many lives.
We miss you so much.
Love, Family and Friends*

William James Steiner

4/18/1974 — 5/27/1994

*Dear Bill,
Another spring and another
birthday without you.
Even with the passage of so much
time you are ever present in our
memories and thoughts.
We love you and miss you. Sending
you our love, till we meet again.
Mom, Dad, Tommy, Pam, Tom,
Emily and Jack.*

John Joseph Carroll

04/26/1981 — 04/27/2021

*We love and miss you!
You are forever in our hearts.
Love, Dad, Mom, & Caitlin*

Toni Mannella

3/28/1992 — 1/30/2019

*Happy Heavenly Birthday.
We miss you.*

Mention My Name submission form

Survivors need to be able to hear, see, and speak the names of the persons they have lost. To ensure your request is included, please send your submission at least two months before publication. Late submission will automatically be included in the next edition unless otherwise indicated. We always do our best to accommodate your request.

Mail your submission to: LOSS Program Catholic Charities, 721 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654

(Allow two months for publishing.) *A donation of any size is appreciated to defray the cost of printing and postage.*

Name of loved one

Date of birth

Date of death

Month requested

Requested by

Relationship

Share your message below. Please limit to 20 words or less; longer messages may be edited as space is limited.

Obelisk Dedication Fund

To ensure continued publication, we have established an Obelisk Fund, which enables LOSS members to assist with the expenses of this newsletter. **There are three ways in which to contribute to our fund:**

1. Dedication of one month's Obelisk: To dedicate a specific month to your loved one, a family may contribute \$2,560, which will cover the total cost of that month's newsletter. Please send this form back with your donation and the name of your loved one, as well as the month you are requesting. Please add a second month choice as sometimes we have more than one member requesting the same month.

I would like to contribute \$_____ in memory of _____.

For the month of _____ or _____.

2. Postage: To make a donation to cover one month's postage, we ask that you send a minimum contribution of \$300. There will be a special section for those who contribute to our postage fund, and your loved one's name will also be on the Mention My Name page.

I would like to contribute \$_____ to cover one month's postage

in memory of _____.

3. Publishing Fund: To be listed as a donor for our publishing fund, a member may contribute any amount to the Obelisk Publishing Fund and have your name listed as a donor. Your loved one's name will appear on the Mention My Name page as well.

I would like to contribute \$_____ to the Obelisk Publishing Fund

in memory of _____.

Your name: _____

Name of your loved one: _____

Date of birth: _____ Date of death: _____ *Note: Please fill out for the Mention My Name page*

Check here if you wish your donation to remain anonymous

Make checks payable to **Catholic Charities LOSS Program**. All donations to the LOSS Program are tax deductible.

Mail to LOSS Program, 721 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL 60654

LOSS Program/Area 281
721 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654

POSTMASTER:
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY



Why the Obelisk?

The Obelisk was chosen as a symbol for the LOSS Program to describe the grief process. The symbol came from the definition of an obelisk: a solid upright four-sided pillar gradually tapering as it rises. The original obelisks were erected in Egypt. The monuments were constructed by many people working together to pull a single block of

granite into place. On the sides of the obelisk, writings were carved into the stone, recording battles and victories of great kings; a permanent testimony to the rulers of Egypt in approximately 1400 B.C. The LOSS Obelisk contains the writings of survivors and survivor-related issues. This is a record of our struggles, our battle to survive. It

represents the support that we gain from meeting with other survivors so that we are not alone on our journey of grief. As we gain strength, the grief tapers off. Our spirits rise and we are able to look up again, to have hope for the future.

