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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

Honoring My Brother, John

Caitlin Carroll

This article was Caitlin Carroll’s speech delivered to attendees and guests at the 35th annual Blossoms of Hope brunch on Sunday, April 26, 2026.

Good morning, and welcome to the Blossoms of Hope brunch 2026. Thank you so much for being here. My name is Caitlin Carroll, and I’m truly honored to serve as this year’s Blossoms of Hope brunch chair. I hope you feel at home here today, and that you’re reminded you’re not alone as you grieve your loved ones — and that there is hope in our shared connection.

Today, I tell you “my why.” I lost my brother John to suicide 5 years ago.

My brother John would have been 45 years old today. The anniversary of his death is tomorrow.

Needless to say, this time of year is challenging for me. Never in a million years did I think I would be a member of a support group for those who lost loved ones to suicide. But then again, who does?

My brother, John, was one of the most loyal, trustworthy and dependable people I knew. He was candid, sincere and always put the people he loved first. He had a quiet way of being present for people, always stepping in when he was needed and never needing to be

the center of attention. He was the calm, steady voice I turned to when things felt overwhelming, and he helped me see things clearly.

Our family has a saying, “Live like John,” because if more people in this world lived life like John did, we would all be better for it. We say it at every family gathering as a way to honor John and keep him present in our lives!

For those of you who know me, you know it’s not unusual for a Catholic priest to be at my parents’ house for dinner. From my childhood through more recent experiences — like traveling abroad — those encounters have always been a positive part of my life. But Father Rubey has had the greatest impact on me. It takes a truly special kind of person to sit with others in moments of deep pain and to walk alongside them through their sorrow and grief.

Our family has a saying, “Live like John,” because if more people in this world lived life like John did, we would all be better for it.

OBELISK

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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 #2

Gina Call	3/2/1970	5/7/1995
Christopher Clark	7/22/1972	4/23/1996
James Collins Clark	3/26/1968	12/13/1989
Virgillio Diaz, Jr	2/14/1968	9/30/1989
Phillip Fricano	12/20/1960	12/20/1997
Joey Gump	3/5/1958	1/16/1980
Kevin Gustafson	12/14/1966	10/16/1997
Lucia Elizabeth Koza	9/29/1922	11/12/1961
Jack Murphy	5/2/1935	8/22/1988
Martin Joseph Redmond	6/10/1964	1/18/1994
Michael Shields	5/9/1962	10/6/1989
Andrew Sikorski	5/29/1983	12/7/1998
Rolland "Rocky" Sprague	12/17/1924	4/10/1987
Greg Stanik	5/1/1967	1/25/1991
Bill Steiner	4/18/1974	5/27/1994
Joseph C. Westphal	12/13/1962	1/4/1997

Quilt #14

Skyler Carl Campbell	5/17/1984	4/16/2004
Russell Joseph Geary	1977	2002
Eric Jacobson	1/17/1985	8/16/2003
Mark Conrad Russell	1970	1999
Joe Robbins	6/19/1974	4/29/1990
Nick Wills	3/1/1981	10/4/1999
Dean A. "Dino" Tighe	3/6/1971	2/21/1992
Jason Toman	10/26/1976	11/18/1999
Natalie M. Gillett	1980	2003
Robert Cruz	1977	1999
Albert Keresztes	1/16/1979	6/19/2001
David W. Bucholz	10/14/1981	7/15/2001
Shawn Walker	9/14/1974	12/29/1999

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 **Deborah Major, Ph.D., LCSW**

Suicide's unexpected and violent intrusion into our life space throws everything up in the air — the way we imagine an unexpected explosion might propel objects out and away from its central force. Cherished beliefs about those we lost, about our relationships, the future, and how the world is supposed to operate are suddenly called into question. Nothing is as we thought. Everything feels unstable, chaotic, and unjust, at least in the beginning of the grief journey. This is where many survivors find themselves when we first meet in our support groups. We suggest that LOSS members come back to our groups for as long as it feels helpful, regardless of how long that is, because in our groups, members find a nurturing network of other survivors, at varying distances from their loss. It is not unusual to meet in the same group new survivors whose loss was barely three months ago, together with those whose loss occurred one, two, or seven years ago and beyond. We have heard from new survivors that it can feel frightening to enter the room and find others whose loss was many years in the past. We think this fear comes from assuming that the survivor whose loss occurred 10 years ago feels the same way as the member whose loss occurred three months ago. This is rarely, if ever, the case. People return year after year because they have something to contribute to others and because there is something present in the circle that they came to receive.

Survivors of suicide are faced with a daunting task, the virtual reconstruction of their life space: revising old assumptions, constructing new beliefs, and finding new paths. When our core beliefs are called into question by devastating tragedy, when assumptions we relied on are torn to shreds, we have a choice about how we respond. We might view this as an opportunity to engage the very questions that so painfully arise. More than one LOSS member recently said, "I don't think I can go on like this. What's the point?" Many survivors arrive at the "What's the point?" question somewhere along the journey. While often raised in a casual way, it points to deeper existential questions about the meaning of life itself. Tragedy invites us to question deeply, "Given what has happened, what

Survivors of suicide are faced with a daunting task, the virtual reconstruction of their life space: revising old assumptions, constructing new beliefs, and finding new paths.

is the meaning of life?" And importantly, "What is the meaning of my life?" For some survivors these questions are matters of faith, and the answers come to them through religious beliefs and practices that guide them along their grief journey. There is a growing body of research that documents the helpfulness of having such a grounding in deep faith. But this is certainly not for everyone, and as a nondenominational grief support program, we do not presume to prescribe it. In any group, you may find yourself sitting next to someone who is deeply religious, or next to someone who espouses no religious beliefs, and everything in between. We see this as part of the beauty of LOSS. The shared experience is not the espousal of a particular set of religious (or other) tenants, but rather the determination to help all comers emerge from the most painful tragedy of their lives.

In a recent meeting where one member openly asked of her fellow survivors, "What's the point?" several people around the circle moved to respond. Their responses were all different, and while I can't say that the content of any one person's response was what the questioner hoped for, the point from my place in the circle was that so many people wanted to help that we literally ran out of time trying to get those responses aired. Some responses came from members who had lost a loved one recently, others from members who had lost their loved one more than a decade ago. I can still envision the faces and feel the energy and investment in the voices of the speakers. In response to her big question, members offered answers that had deep personal meaning to them. There is a collective wisdom that comes to the forefront in the group experience. Sometimes, the wisdom is about the content of participants' viewpoints, but more often it seems to be about the process that takes place between people. Having experienced in a visceral

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Father Rubey was a light for my family during our darkest times, and he continues to be that light for us today. I'm deeply grateful for his leadership and for his unwavering dedication to the LOSS program over the past 47 years.

The most valuable lesson I have learned from Father Rubey and the LOSS program is that there is real healing in sharing our grief. The LOSS program creates that opportunity — it offers a space where people can show up exactly as they are in that moment. And most importantly, it reminds us that wherever we are in our journey, it's OK.

As Stephen Colbert said, “What do you get from loss? You get awareness of other people’s loss which allows you to connect with that other person; which allows you to love more deeply and understand what it’s like to be a human being. And it’s in recognizing other people’s loss that allows you to connect with them and to love them in a deep way that accepts that all of us suffer. It’s about the fullness of humanity, it’s not about being the best human, it’s about being the most human and being grateful for the thing I most wish had not happened, because that gave me a gift.”

If I’m being honest, I had to listen to that episode of Anderson Cooper’s *All There Is* podcast with Stephen Colbert several times before I truly understood the meaning behind his statement. But one day, it finally clicked— and from that moment on, it changed the way I approach every interaction. It reshaped how I show up as a daughter, a fiancé, a niece, a cousin, a friend, a boss, a colleague, and a physical therapist.

Father Rubey was a light for my family during our darkest times, and he continues to be that light for us today.

I leave you with a poem by Donna Ashworth that I read a couple of weeks ago:

“You don’t move on after loss, but you must move with.

You must shake hands with grief,

Welcome her in, for she lives with you now.

Pull her a chair at the table and offer her comfort.

She is not the monster you first thought her to be.

She is love.

And she will walk with you now, stay with you now, peacefully.

If you let her.

And on the days when your anger is high,

Remember why she came.

Remember who she represents.

Remember.

Grief came to you, my friend, because love came first.

Love came first.”

(Ashworth, *Wild Hope*, 2023)

Thank you all for being a part of LOSS and for contributing to the legacy of the LOSS program.

Caitlin Carroll, DPT, is a physical therapist practicing with Athletico in Chicago, Illinois. She lost her brother John in 2021, and together with her parents, Caitlin has been volunteering with the LOSS Program since 2023.

From the Desk of Deborah Major

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way the disruption of the world as it was understood before the suicide, survivors seem to understand that they may not impose any authoritative view of truth about death, about grief, or about the future. Rather, in groups, members “feel their way along” together, as a community of grievers whose shared aim is to tolerantly and respectfully offer up the possibility of a new future where survivors receive and offer hope to one another. In such a setting no one person’s comments are superior to any others. Rather, it is through the process of respectfully sharing the space, of listening to and talking with each other, that new realities gradually begin to emerge.

There is really no way to predict what new life possibilities can emerge from the initial ground of despair (no way to predict how any individual will choose to answer the question, “What’s the point?”). Many, but not all of you know of the new prevention programs, the survivor websites and podcasts, as well as the new relationships that began around our tables. This is new life that no one person hands to any other, but rather new life meanings that are co-created by survivors together, side by side, in the moment. For 47 years, we have been here to listen, and more importantly, to connect with each other. I wish I could state with confidence that the need for LOSS would disappear within the next 47 years, but current suicide statistics belie this wish. We can, however, commit to being a place where survivors can come together to grapple with life’s deepest questions, to find new meaning in our stories; and a place where we turn to extend our hands to survivors coming through the doors behind us.

Honesty After Loss

Cynthia Waderlow, MSE, LCSW

Grief has been said to strip away everything that is non-essential, a distillation process. But after the gaping shock of a suicide, the mind of the survivor is beset with layers of questions and conflicting narratives. For adults and children old enough to comprehend that the loved person ended his or her own life, making sense of the profound and unexpected loss seems to become a primary focus, and this can be a relentless, preoccupied emotional process. Truth, as it relates to suicide grief, may alter the way that we look at the past, and we may have little insight at first, as to what matters and what doesn't. Suddenly, we are surviving in a storm of questions. An adult's world view may be mightily challenged. Children and teens may also engage in similar questioning and re-prioritizing, but the pace is more graduated and subject to a worldview that is less stable to begin with. Fortunately, children and teens grieve intermittently, and this allows them respite for necessary developmental tasks, allowing time to develop a more mature perspective on loss and suicide. Children will watch parents for cues in responding to the upheaval of loss.

At any stage of recovery, the mind can be taxed with questions, a sense of guilt, traumatic images, and a battle to keep disturbing thoughts and feelings repressed. Suicide loss almost always triggers feelings of abandonment and causes us to question our relationship with the person who died. Additionally, suicide may complicate our relationships with others in the family system. As we become conscious of uncomfortable feelings and questions, we may repress them. We manage to offer a resigned face to the world, yet there may be some loyalty to secrecy and pretense as a result of a lingering stigma around suicide. We want to protect the loved one we lost, ourselves and our children. Denial produces a more deliberate, quickly formed story of the loss and its impact on our lives.

When bereavement is new, the protections that we cultivate against the pain are instinctive. These emotional defenses operate like scaffolding so that more mainstream functioning is possible — pretending that the loved one is away, staying strong by not opening to feelings about the loss, not talking about the loss, not examining dynamics

prior to the suicide — are initial avoidances that may allow time for adjustment. And yet, the intentional defenses holding us up require awareness and maintenance, and sometimes break down, leading to mood swings and behavioral changes. The denial that is less within our awareness — perhaps related to facts of mental illness or addiction experienced by the deceased, memory gaps or idealization regarding our history with the person and numbing of feelings with behaviors or substances — these take us farther away from self-knowledge acquired through grief's intimate processes. As we move into denial, we are attempting to survive the loss with a litany of small but significant omissions of personal truth in order to manage life, relationships, and self-esteem. But what is sacrificed?

When bereavement is new, the protections that we cultivate against the pain are instinctive.

When we fail to muster readiness for honesty as it relates to loss, we can lose vital pieces of ourselves, and the experience of our deceased loved one. Wearing blinders sacrifices the broad view, the tableau of a complex, evolving personal history, too precious to turn away from. Our own truth about loss, our own narrative, may differ from that of our spouse, our family members. When we adapt our loss narrative to fit that of another, we need defenses to repress our own perspectives, which could have implications for relationships. Here is my example, although not suicide related: My father died after a final infection followed by a long illness. Part of my family's narrative was that mother was his faithful caregiver. She was, but I saw several instances where she was careless, even cavalier with transmission of bacteria, and I was angry about it. After Dad's death, she was vulnerable and alone, but my unexpressed anger and blame created distance, preventing my being closer to her. Fortunately, I worked through the anger so that our final years together included genuine warmth and intimacy. I needed to recognize her exhaustion and burnout, her history of being unable to take care of her emotional needs, and the effects of my father's personality

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on her. The larger, more compassionate grief narrative allowed me to come to peace with my father's death.

Grief moves forward as we confront our personal truths. In doing so, we need a safe place to express anger, resentment, suspicion, sorrow, apathy, emptiness, fear and guilt, because these are terribly vulnerable feelings and part of our unique loss experience. Going into our truth offers a high-definition view of our experience and a sense of who we are. When we penetrate our grief defenses and denial, we may uncover the more vulnerable feelings, such as fear, feelings of loss of control, feelings of guilt or inadequacy and finally, sorrow, the heart of grief.

How do we get to a more honest understanding of our grief experience?

Stop saying yes when we really mean no.

Identify our defenses.

Acknowledge when we are scared.

Notice when we are acting differently than we really feel.

Be wary when we tell ourselves we are going to address a feeling, an issue or perspective, but we never do.

Acknowledge tunnel vision: Realize that our truth is just our own truth, and not the only truth.

Hold ourselves to a higher standard of internal truth telling, resulting in more self-trust, self-worth, and closer relationships.

How does a grieving parent's submission to personal truth affect the grief responses of her children?

The entire family system is affected positively by internal truth telling, especially after the death of a primary family figure. We are messaging freedom and validation of all feelings. Deeper emotional honesty reveals the complex, nuanced relationship with the deceased in which grief comes to embrace flaws and wounds. Consider too, that the integrity of this work leads to fuller honesty in other areas of our lives. Since we take ourselves everywhere we go, the transformative nature of deep grief work, with its need for honesty about our relationship, the past, the meaning we make of the suicide and our vision for the future connects us to ourselves. We realize that the meaning we make of loss involves curiosity and flexible thinking.

The LOSS Program can support you and your family in transformative grief work through group and individual counseling options.

Although suicide grief is never tidy, a cleansing process is possible as we wrestle with hard-to-look-at truths, offering the potential for peace and renewal. The LOSS Program can support you and your family in transformative grief work through group and individual counseling options.

How the World Goes on

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

The burr relies on brittle pricklers,
cheat grass on sharp and spiky barbs,
and then there's the milkweed
that attaches its seeds to gossamer fluff
and spills forth in an ecstasy of diaphanous floss,
white puffs of wish-downy, dream-gauzy,
breeze-easy lushness. Oh, heart,
this, too, is what survival looks like—
an almost impossible softness
that gathers light in silky froth
and entrusts itself to the wind.

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer (2024)
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LOSS WEATHER LINE

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Announcements

At Peace Memorial Dedication

Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleums, Hillside, Illinois

The dedication of the At Peace Memorial will take place **Friday, June 26 at 1 p.m.** at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleums, 1400 S. Wolf Road, Hillside.



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 Cemetery that we hope will bring a sense of peace and healing to those who have been impacted by suicide.

If you are unable to attend the dedication, you are welcome to visit the memorial at your leisure any day between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. until Oct. 15th. Please call the cemetery to confirm at (708) 236-5400.

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.

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, July 20, 2026, at 7 p.m.** at the Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road, Lake Forest, Illinois. To register, contact Bill Teskoski at wteskoski@sbcglobal.net or (312) 560-3119.

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.

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 use the link below that will take you to the donation form on the Catholic Charities website. Click "Other Designation" and then type "LOSS Program" in the box that asks where you want your donation to be applied.

<https://www.catholiccharities.net/give/donate-form/>

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
P.O. 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 St., 7th Floor), **Marist High School in Chicago** (4200 W. 115th St.), **St. Joseph’s Church in Wilmette** (1747 Lake Ave.), **St. Francis de Sales Church in Lake Zurich** (135 South Buesching Rd.), **St. Joan of Arc Church in Lisle** (820 Division St.), **St. John the Evangelist Church Narthex in St. John, Indiana** (10701 Olcott Ave.).

July 2026 Meetings

In-Person

- 1st Thursday Group**
 July 9, 2026** 7 p.m.
****Holiday Schedule**
 St. John the Evangelist
 St. John, Indiana
 Group meets in Church Narthex
 Facilitators: Steve Costa, Jim & Kris Kazmierczak
- 2nd Monday Group**
 July 13, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Jeannette Scalise & Reeny Linstrom
- 3rd Wednesday Group**
 July 15, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales, Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Sandy Bouriseau & Tish Guinter
- 3rd Thursday Group**
 July 16, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitator: Lance Beigh
- 4th Tuesday Group**
 July 28, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitator: Ann Marie Leofanti
- 4th Sunday Group**
 July 26, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Joseph’s Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Merle Cowin & Marion Kahle

Online

- 2nd Tuesday Group**
 July 14, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim & Tina Kranz
- 3rd Tuesday Group**
 July 21, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Cherie Emling & Tish Guinter

Special Interest

- Spousal Loss Group**
2nd Wednesday
 July 8, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph Lukz
 Facilitators: Eileen Hurn & Gina Petit
- Parent Support Group**
3rd Thursday
 July 16, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Jim Lampa & Patty LaPorta
- Spanish-Speaking Group**
2nd Tuesday
 July 14, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda DeLeon
- STAR Group for first responder families**
1st Tuesday
 July 7, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician:
 Alicja Bochenek-Schultz
 Facilitator: Tish Guinter

August 2026 Meetings

In-Person

- 1st Thursday Group**
 Aug. 6, 2026; 7 p.m.
 St. John the Evangelist,
 St. John, Indiana
 Facilitators: Steve Costa,
 Jim & Kris Kazmierczak
- 2nd Monday Group**
 Aug. 10, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Downtown Chicago
 Clinician: Deborah Major
 Facilitators: Cherie Emling & Eileen Hurn
- 3rd Wednesday Group**
 Aug. 19, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Francis de Sales,
 Lake Zurich
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Sandy Bouriseau & Tish Guinter
- 3rd Thursday Group**
 Aug. 20, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 St. Joan of Arc, Lisle
 Clinician: Mary Novak
 Facilitator: Kathleen Sergent
- 4th Tuesday Group**
 Aug. 25, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Marist High School, Chicago
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators: Lance Beigh & Barb Murphy
- 4th Sunday Group**
 Aug. 23, 2026; 6 p.m.
 St. Joseph’s Church, Wilmette
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitator: Marion Kahle

Online

- 2nd Tuesday Group**
 Aug. 11, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Sharon Bibro
 Facilitators: Jim & Tina Kranz
- 3rd Tuesday Group**
 Aug. 18, 2026; 6 p.m.
 Clinician: Laraine Bodnar
 Facilitators: Patty LaPorta & Cherie Emling
- Special Interest**
Spousal Group
2nd Wednesday
 Aug. 12, 2026; 7 p.m.
 Clinician: Cheryl Joseph-Lukz
 Facilitators: Gina Petit & Yvonne Papciak
- Spanish-Speaking Group**
2nd Tuesday
 Aug. 11, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Victor Alvarez
 Facilitator: Yolanda De Leon
- Parent Support Group**
3rd Thursday
 Aug. 20, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
 Clinician: Michele Nowak
 Facilitators:
 Mark & Mary Edwards
- STAR Group for first responder families**
1st Tuesday
 Aug. 4, 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 September 2026 Meetings

In-Person

1st Thursday Group

Sept. 3, 2026; 7 p.m.
Saint John the Evangelist,
St. John, Indiana

2nd Monday Group

Sept. 14, 2026; 6 p.m.
Downtown Chicago

3rd Wednesday Group

Sept. 16, 2026; 6 p.m.
St. Francis de Sales,
Lake Zurich

3rd Thursday Group

Sept. 17, 2026; 6:30 p.m.
St. Joan of Arc Church, Lisle

4th Tuesday Group

Sept. 22, 2026; 7 p.m.
Marist High School, Chicago

4th Sunday Group

Sept. 27, 2026; 6 p.m.
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette

Online

2nd Tuesday Group

Sept. 8, 2026; 7 p.m.

3rd Tuesday Group

Sept. 15, 2026; 6 p.m.

Special Interest

Spousal Loss Group

2nd Wednesday
Sept. 9, 2026; 7 p.m.

Parent Support Group

3rd Thursday
Sept. 17, 2026; 6:30 p.m.

Spanish-Speaking Group

2nd Tuesday
Sept. 8, 2026; 6:30 p.m.

STAR Group for first

responder families
1st Tuesday
Sept. 1, 2026; 6 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 Postage Fund
is dedicated in Memory of*
Kevin John Rowan
Steven M. Pasquerelli



Mention My Name

Benjamin Alexander

6/26/1984—7/16/2017

*You left us too soon.
We love and miss you to the moon
and back.*

Mikey Dominick Gillespie

8/4/2000—3/16/2022

*Missing you on your birthday
and Always.
We love you forever.*

Kevin John Rowan

10/22/1970—7/28/2001

*The lonely days and months have
stretched into 25 long years, dear
Kevin, and we miss you always.
Love, Mom and Dan*

Gregory Wyrobek

4/9/1971—1/31/2022

*My dear loving son we all miss you
every second of every day.
You brought so much joy into our
lives, and we are so proud of you.
And we love you.
We know you are our angel now.
Love, Mom, David, Paul & Leilani*

Carolyn Marie Donnelly

9/9/1984—7/11/2003

*Carolyn, I miss you so.
Everyday I wonder why.
You would have loved your nieces
and nephews.
Rest in peace,
Momma*

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.

