

51st EDITION - FEBRUARY 2013 NEWSLETTER



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POEM SENT IN BY A FRIEND 4 ME

My Feelings
My past is a bad one
I've learnt to hide
But some of you know it
I can see in your eyes
So what do I do
Where do I hide
What are you thinking
With misunderstood eyes
I carry my shame
It's all my fault
My life full of torture

DIRECTORS REPORT

Drawing on the experiences of people who have gone through the trauma of a suicide can help us cope if we are ever faced with a similar situation.

The tragic after-effects of suicide has an influence on all of us.

The death of a loved-one, family member, friend, colleague or casual acquaintance through suicide has repercussions on our future lives.

English poet, lawyer and cleric, John Donne, summed this up when he wrote: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind."

True-life stories are an important tool in helping dispel the misinformation surrounding suicides and mental health.

White Wreath Association receives many suicide stories written by people telling their personal experiences about loved ones who have suicided.

If you would like to share your experiences of your efforts to receive help for loved ones contemplating suicide and what you went through after they suicided, please forward brief scenarios we can share with others.

The scenarios, not more than an A4 page, may be placed in our newsletter and website under personal stories.

Your experiences may help others recognise the early signs of suicide intentions being exhibited by their loved ones, friends and colleagues.

Fanita Clark
CEO

**PETER NEAME RESEARCH OFFICER WHITE
WREATH ASSOC LTD**

I hide in my house
The silence not lasting
I am just the mouse
The look in your eyes
It drives me insane
Maybe just a smile
Can ease my pain
You don't know my side
It's story untold
With pen to paper
All soon will be told
So as we reflect
And wait for an ending
What will it become
When I'm not mending
Friend or foe
We will all soon discover
But most of you can't
handle
What you will discover
A friend 4 me
Is being published
By the time you read it
I will be a nothing
My name will be lost
In a past that's a blunder.

HUMOUR

A woman walks up to an old man sitting in a chair on his porch.
"I couldn't help but notice how happy you look," she said.
"What's your secret for a long, happy life?"
"I smoke three packs a day, drink a case of beer, eat fatty foods, and never, ever exercise," he replied.
"Wow, that's amazing," she said,
"How old are you?"
"Twenty-six."

To realise the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed exams. To realise the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby. To realise the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realise the value of ONE

Once in a while there is a confluence of news stories that illustrates the points I have been making for over 30 years. As a result of concerted campaign the road toll is at lows – with similar targeted campaign suicide could be cut by at least 50 per cent.

Generally females genetically are tougher, more resilient than males. That is why the suicide rate is lower than males. The hard or scientific evidence is that the female hormones, eostrogen and progesterone are protective in every way.

It is common for suicidal mentally ill people to refuse care and not believe that they are ill. The safe and right approach would be to admit compulsory for a period of assessment of at least two weeks.

Life threatening illnesses should not be left to subjective judgment and this one approach would reduce completed suicides for both male and female by 50 per cent.

NEW POSITION WHITE WREATH ASSOC LTD COPYWRITER

Retired Brisbane journalist, Ian Ross, is the new volunteer copywriter for the White Wreath Association.

Ian has 50 years experience in journalism, ranging from senior positions in suburban, country and city newspapers, to being a Federal senatorial media officer.

He retired in December last year after serving since 1996 as editor of the Queensland Health statewide staff magazine, Health Matters.

Ian says he first became acquainted with the work of White Wreath in compiling the Queensland Health annual calendar of health-related funding events, such as Sock It To Suicide Week.

"In the past few years, I have attended several funerals of acquaintances who suicided, and always left thinking they probably didn't realise how many friends they had," Ian said.

"I decided to offer my expertise to White Wreath after seeing the copywriter position in a volunteer work web site."

INTO RECEIVING

Please don't forget Membership Renewals are due on the 28th February 2013

For your interest on the front page of our website people may opt in to receive our quarterly newsletter via email free of charge. However White Wreath Assoc has an area of our website that is locked and only paid members are able to access. Paid members receive details of how to access.

HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet. To realise the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who just missed a train. To realise the value of ONE SECOND, ask someone who just avoided an accident. To realise the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal at the Olympics.

WORLD NEWS

Guest opinion: Mental illness strains families

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2012/dec/30/guest-opinion-mental-illness-strains-families/>

Our eyes have not stayed dry for long as we have watched the awful events surrounding the carnage in Newtown, Conn. How could anyone be so “evil” as to coldly gun down his mother, children, and adults trying to protect the children? The act has “evil” written all over it. However, there are many of us who see the picture with a wider perspective.

I am a mother of two sons with mental illness. I have dealt with six close relatives and several friends who have been afflicted with moderate to severe mental illness. I am torn apart emotionally and cognitively with the thought of having children and adults gunned down senselessly. I am also torn apart by the reality of what the families of mentally ill loved ones go through. Our family has walked in those footsteps.

Mentally ill people are born as beautiful and precious as all other children. Their parents, if able, love, nurture and protect them in every way possible. Almost always they are noticeably bright and creative. At some point some worrisome behaviors begin to appear. Parents and others have concerns and think of all possible reasons for the behaviors, least of all wanting to consider mental illness. Denial is a huge factor, as well as stigma and shame. Finally, the one or ones who have stuck by the ill person seek help. By this time, the whole family system is hurting, and many marriages start to crack.

Herein begins the most frustrating part of the journey. The caring person who seeks help usually feels quite alone, at least for a while. Then there is the confidentiality issue – a horrible hurdle. By the time the ill person is 21 years of age, the parents may be treated as if they are nobodies – this is the way we perceived we were treated by some of the professionals to whom we first turned.

Eventually there will be attempts at calling mental health professionals to come evaluate the ill person. The person must meet at least one of three criteria to be involuntarily hospitalized: plans to take his own life; plans to take other lives; unable to care for self minimally. Remember, these ill people are usually very intelligent and can present well when threatened. After the evaluation is complete, and if the person is deemed not at risk, his anger frequently turns on whoever he knows reported him.

If the ill person finally gets far enough to receive a diagnosis and medication, the journey of terror is far from over for him and those surrounding him. Many ill people choose not to comply with meds and necessary lifestyle changes. Alcohol and drugs often are in the picture. Psychotic episodes may be part of the illness, and there is no way to reason with what the ill person now perceives to be absolute truth. Frustration, blame, terror, hopelessness, confusion and love are mixed up in one big nightmare for the ill person and those who care. I do not have solutions, but I do have a heart and voice to share this journey that thousands of us are either on presently, have been on, or

very soon will be on. What has come clear to me is that every single one of us is not much more than a hair's breadth away from having mental illness ourselves. Mental illness is brain chemistry dysfunction, in simple terms, and there are multitudes of ways our brain chemistry can be thrown into dysfunction. People with brain chemistry issues are not idiots. The behaviors may seem crazy to those whose brain chemistry is functioning within the normal range, and the behaviors do have the potential to escalate to horrible violence, to evil acts. The ill person and those surrounding him live in terror of such acts. The pain for all involved is awful beyond description.

I cannot reason why Adam Lanza's mother had all those guns in her possession. My assumption about her is that she was a mom – just as I am – who was trying in every way possible to make life work for her son. I know many other moms who are presently doing the same. We hope that somehow we will find a way to keep our mentally ill loved one safe from himself, and all innocents safe from him.

Please choose to embrace with love, care, and kind words of truth all those you know who are going through this journey.

Sharon C. Clegg is a retired educator who graduated from Whitworth University.

CORRESPONDENCE

Well, I'm not really sure how to do this.. But, here goes.

October 7th, 2010, exactly a week after my 14th birthday, I attempted to commit suicide. I shot myself in the head with a 22 Rugger handgun. I felt as if nobody cared, like something was wrong with me because I just couldn't be happy no matter what I did. I didn't want to feel this way but, I couldn't control it. I felt like a burden on my family, I felt as if it'd be easier on them if I just disappeared. That day at school, all I could think about was, "What if I just wasn't here? No more pain, no more hurt, no more disappointing everyone, NO MORE SUFFERING." That same day, I had a school French project to work on, I sent it to my mom's email so she could print it off. I told her when she got home. Apparently, I sent it to the wrong email, I sent it to her work email. We had an argument over this, I felt even more worthless and ignorant. It wasn't a small argument, or at least I didn't think so, I felt pretty insignificant at the end of it. My mom went to her work to print it off. By that time, I was done with everything. I went up to my grandparents house, played with my little brother, told him I loved him, and went inside, down the hall, into their bedroom to the dresser drawer where the handgun lay. I made sure it was loaded, went out the back door and into the woods. I walked down our path in the woods til' I reached a large oak tree, tears were streaming down my face the whole walk down and by the time I reached the tree, I was hysterical. I put the gun to my head, bawling, asking myself why I felt the way I do, how could no one see the pain I am in?! I lowered the gun and walked deeper into the woods. I shot off into the woods just to see what it was going to be like. I was scared, who wouldn't have been though? There I was, just turned 14 years old wanting to end my

life.. Finally, I flung my arm up to my head and squeezed the trigger.

I awoken, unaware of what I had done, I was bleeding profusely, there was blood in my hair, in my mouth, it was everywhere.. I reached into my pocket for my cell phone, I dialed my mother's cell phone and my older sister answered. "Help me, I don't know what happened. I'm in the woods past the big oak tree. I'm bleeding a lot, I think I hit my head. I can't move, hurry!!" My sister arrives, she picks me up and carries me to my stepdad's truck. He begins asking what happened. All I can tell him is, "I don't know".. We're on our way to the hospital, he tells me, "Mind you, someone was shooting in the woods." And that's when I realized.. I replied, "It was me.. I shot myself". We met my mother on the road, he rolled down his window and yells, "B... shot herself!" My mom thinks that one of my stepdad's guns fell and misfired and shot my leg or something. She had no idea..

We reached the hospital. I remember them putting me on a stretcher and cutting all of my clothing off. They then stuck a tube down my throat to breathe for me because I was no longer breathing. That's all I remember of it. They put me in a helicopter and rushed me to Hospital, where I had multiple surgeries to keep me alive.

Since then, I feel I have gotten a little better. I discovered who I really am or at least more than I had before. I realized, it was okay to be ME. To not care what people think, to be happy with who I am. I like girls, that's a "problem" in my life. People give me shi* about it all the time and make my life a living Hell. I've learned to move past it though. I'm stronger than that.

I found this website Googling, "How to stab myself in the heart".. Right now, I'm crying again, back to the feeling of suicide and depression. Nothing in my life is good right now. Yes, I have food, water, and shelter but, things are still missing. I feel selfish for wanting to die because, I know there are less fortunate people out there but, I cannot help the way I feel inside.. I wish to no longer exist.

If anyone is out there for me to talk to, I could really use it. Thank you so much for reading. God Bless!

B

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as I am in need of some help. I have been suffering from severe depression for a number of months now and have become suicidal or very close to the edge and I think I am getting worse. This year 2012 I have thrown away my life basically, my job, my partner, my future direction.

This came about due to health issues, which I have finally (after many doctors/specialists) found the cause a severe kidney and liver infection from food allergies. I was continually misdiagnosed. I became very, very depressed and now after a snowball effect from

losing everything I have gone so far down I am not sure how to make it back out. This may all sound trivial but I have had so many set-backs just trying to get back on track and so many missed opportunities that I feel that I am nothing more than a failure.

I am homeless (no job = no home) I was living in (Which I miss) but had to go and stay with my brother in, although this ended up making me worse, due to my isolation and lack of real understanding from family how to help me.

I am now thus with my younger brother & family in but have to vacate from here asap, they have helped but they have no idea what I am going through. I do not want to burden any of them anymore, especially my mother. So I have no-where to go and I am not sure where to begin to access any services (govt etc) that may assist me. I am totally against medical professionals as I have seen a few and they immediately try to administer medication, something that shows me that they have failed in there duty and plus these would only make me worse I am sure.

I really just need some time and space to heal both mind and body yet have no place for this. I constantly feel that there is only one option and I am having a lot trouble seeing any other alternative.

So this is a call for help from me to an organisation that I know has a real idea of what I am going through, with people that have faced this before.

I just need some light shone on the darkness.

A

Good afternoon Fanita,

Thank you for email. Yesterday was a perfect day for the run, I managed to complete the 14km in just under 1 hour 18mins.

I hope the money that I raised for your organisation can assist in a small way. I lost my brother to suicide last year and I only wish our family had received support from the mental health profession. My brother was in a "voluntary" recovery centre for four weeks and was deemed low risk even though he had expressed many times to the doctors and case manager he was suicidal. I had also voiced my concerns as there is a history of suicide in our family.

I am so angry at the failure of the mental health system. I met with the so called experts a few days after Wayne's death and the only explanation they could give me was one (1) he was voluntary, two (2) how do you know when they are going to take their life. Our family is waiting for a coronial inquest where I hope the coroner will recommend a number of changes to the centres procedures so no family has to experience the trauma.

I wish you all the best in achieving the White Wreath's objective of establishing a safe centre for people at risk and continue to offer support to the families left to deal with such a tragedy.

All the best

Regards H

Hi, my name is S D and I am 15 years old, attending C State High School. I am to participate in at least 26 hours total of active volunteering for a non for profit organisation on the dates of 26 - 30 November. I was wondering if your organisation would kindly accept me and two other students at C High to help volunteer at a location nearby as we are interested to partake in a few days worth of volunteering for your company. We are interested in volunteering at this organisation because we understand how serious suicide is and the effects it has upon the victim and others. We also want to help change the victim's point of view on life and make a difference to our generation and to help change lives around.

Please reply asap if you are interested.

Thankyou,

S D

Hi there, I've done a brief search on line, and so far you're website is the most relevant one I've found that is directly addressing suicide, without wrapping it all up in words - we are seeking to emulate what you have done here in NZ - can you please let me know if you have a sister organisation here? We don't want to reinvent the wheel, but NZ has a major issue with suicide being "swept under the carpet" and we need action urgently.

Many thanks,

D

RAFFLE WINNERS

With White Wreath Assoc's permission one of our very dear volunteers who is nearing her eighties organised a raffle within her local area of a first and second prize and raised \$335.00. She walked many kilometers selling tickets wherever she could and White Wreath is very grateful for her kind support.

WINNERS

1st Prize

Green ticket B40 won by **Amanda**

2nd Prize

Yellow ticket G53 won by Heidi

COMING EVENTS

NATIONAL WHITE WREATH DAY – IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALL VICTIMS OF SUICIDE

&

NATIONAL “WEAR WHITE AT WORK”

Yearly 29 May

WHITE WREATH DAY SERVICE

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY 2013

POST OFFICE SQUARE

BRISBANE (CBD)

DISPLAY ON VIEW ALL DAY

OFFICIAL CEREMONY 12.30PM – 1.30PM

WHITE WREATH DAY FLYER



The flyer features a dark blue header with a white wreath logo on the left. To the right of the logo, the text reads "White Wreath Association Ltd" and "National White Wreath Day, 29th May". Below the wreath logo is the tagline "Action Against Suicide". The main body of the flyer is white with black text. It includes a section titled "National White Wreath Day, 29th May In Remembrance of All Victims of Suicide" followed by a paragraph explaining the event. A quote from a representative is placed in a light blue box on the right side. Below the quote is a photograph of a public display of white wreaths. At the bottom left, there are sections titled "How to get involved?" and "How you can help?". The White Wreath Association Ltd logo is repeated in the bottom right corner.

White Wreath Association Ltd
"Action Against Suicide"

**National White Wreath Day,
29th May**

**National White Wreath Day, 29th May
In Remembrance of All Victims of Suicide**

White Wreath Association have established National White Wreath Day, 29th May in remembrance of all victims of suicide. All around Australia, services will be held nationally to commemorate this important event, where thousands of white wreaths are laid in remembrance of each individual who have died tragically by suicide circumstances.

In Australia, we have to come to terms with the trauma of thousands of our fellow citizens (men, women and children) suiciding every year. For those left behind by these tragedies, the hurt is no less traumatic and yet society's response to these surviving families and friends is vastly different from the help offered in other kinds of medical and social tragedies. It seems that no one cares or understands that the families and friends of suicide victims are in as much need of help and support as of other associations and are just as deserving of our understanding and respect. We have been creating in the wider community – awareness of the misconception relating to suicide/mental illness and the lack of appropriate treatment readily available related to people feeling suicidal.

Our objective is to raise the much needed funds to build centres around Australia - places of safety for those when suicide threatens. We wish to bring awareness to the Australian society that these people are not statistic figures but dearly loved human beings loved by their family, carers and friends. Together, we can combat this epidemic and reduce these frightening figures.

How to get involved?

This year, on 29th May, we wish to welcome the public to lay photographs, flowers, wreaths, poems and sentimental memorabilia for those who loss a loved one or close friend by the tragic means of suicide. White wreaths and tags will be available at the services in your state.

How you can help?

We are contactable 24 hrs a day for anyone who is in need of assistance Australia wide on 1300 766 177. Visit website, www.whitewreath.com or email, www.whitewreath@bigpond.com if you wish to make a donation. With your help and support, together we can fight reduce the number of suicidal deaths.

“Our objective is to raise the much needed funds to build centres around Australia - places of safety for those when suicide threatens. We wish to bring awareness to Australia - society that these people are not statistic figures but dearly loved human beings loved by their family, carers & friends”

White Wreath Association Ltd
Action Against Suicide

WEAR WHITE TO WORK FLYER



‘Wear white at work’ 29 May

and donate a gold coin to
show your support for
mental illness sufferers and
families of suicide victims

Get your workplace involved! Call us today on 1300 766 177

www.whitewreath.com

A FRIEND 4 ME MY STORY

KELLY’S JOURNAL CONTINUED

Middle of December 2009- Telling Jo

By now I have the house to myself. David and the kids have moved out. My feeling for Jo is so strong. I truly believe by now that we are soul mates. We are meant to be together. I have never told anyone how I felt about them in my life. I can’t let this one go. I have never felt so strong about anyone in my life. The day comes and I have to tell her how I feel. Facebook, you have to love it. I waited for Jo to come home from work. I knew she would be home around 930pm. I decided if she was on line that I would tell her. She came on line. She said what are you still doing up. I told her I’m waiting for you. I want to tell you something but I don’t want to upset you. Do you wish for me to continue? She said yes. I asked are you sure? She said go for it. I wrote I want you really bad. She didn’t answer. Then I wrote that one made you think. She answered you are just saying that because things are not going well at home. I wrote you think so. She answered you don’t want to get involved with me I’m fucked up and I wrote and I’m not. I wanted to kill myself you can’t say I’m not fucked in the head. That was the first time I admitted to myself that I really wanted to die. Nothing much else was said that night and Jo only remained a friend. I see her a few days later at work. I was so scared to face her after what I told her. She tells me” I’m sorry I can’t offer you more than friendship”. Every time I watched her I wanted her so bad. Why couldn’t she give me a chance? At least she was still being my friend. Maybe in time things will change for us.

Christmas Eve 2009- losing it

When my kids left with David the younger 2 blamed me. They hated me and would not even go to McDonalds for tea with me. It was really hard but I knew they would forgive me when they see how much happier I was. Christmas this year was going to be a great family day for me. I had made arrangements for David and the kids to stay the

night and I had all their presents ready. We went down to Harry's Hotdogs for tea. It did not go well. When we got home things was no better. My memory dies hear but it ends with Dylan telling me he hated me and would never see me again. They were leaving to go back to my mother-in-laws house where they were staying. Dean wanted to stay with me but I told David to take him too. I was not having the family broken up for Christmas. I packed up all their gifts and sent them back with David. When they left I went down to the bottle shop. I had never drunk in my life but tonight it was going to change. I brought a bottle of jack Daniels being my choice as that's what I had seen my brother drink. I went home and got the kitchen knife and went to the bathroom so I wouldn't make a mess. I stripped off under the shower. I needed to be drunk so I could do this. I drank half the bottle until I was drinking and vomiting at the same time. I was so upset. Never being drunk before I underestimated what would happen next. The alcohol made me laugh so bad. I was crying and laughing at the same time. The knife was now useless to me. I picked up my phone and called Trudi. Trudi and Catherine had only been my friend for a short time. They were both work mates. I tried to talk to her but all I could do was cry and laugh at the same time. I ended up saying merry Christmas and hang up. I didn't know it at the time but David had spoken to my sister Melissa. I heard a knock at the door and went to answer it. It was Melissa. She was so angry when she seen the state of me. She found the jack Daniels and knife in the shower. I asked her to phone Trudi to tell her I was alright. Melissa took me back to mums house for the night. Christmas the next day was a blur to me. I had a really bad hangover. David collected me in the morning to watch the kids unwrap their gifts. Everyone was unhappy but Christmas came and went with no more problems. The world of alcohol had me now. I knew when I was upset it would make me happy again. So I started to get drunk a lot and with the smoking things was not looking good for my future. Jo at work was starting to avoid me. She could see me going downhill. My love for her was so strong. My future with her was going to be so great. She keeps me going and she keeps me strong. It's only a matter of time before she will realise that we are made for each other. She is all I can think about. My kids want no more to do with me. They see me as evil and they watch their dad in pain. I have cut all ties with him. I don't allow him to visit or spend any time with me. I think this will help him move on and forget about me easier. I don't want him hanging on with hope that we will one day be together. I was all alone. Trudi and Catherine was all I had. I was sent out of my unit at work one day where I meet Bronwyn. I had worked with her years earlier and had not seen her since. I told her what had happened. She gave me her number and told me if I ever needed her to phone. I told her I can't wait till David finds a new girlfriend so he leaves me alone. She said when that happens I would not be able to handle it. I left her unit that day not thinking twice about her advice. I know what I need in life and it was not David. I needed him out of my life. To be continued.....

WISH LIST

Petrol Gift Cards, Stamps, DL Envelopes, A4 Envelopes,

Volunteers Aust/Wide

OR YOU MAY LIKE TO DONATE

DONATIONS TAX DEDUCTIBLE

1. Via our credit card facility posted on our Website
www.whitewreath.com then follow the instruction.
2. Directly/Direct Transfer into any Westpac Bank
Account Name White Wreath Association Ltd
BSB No 034-109 Account No 210509
3. Cheque/Money Order to White Wreath Association Ltd

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