



## **Media Contacts**

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## **Hospice of the Valley of Northern California in collaboration with the Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention host the 14<sup>th</sup> annual International Survivors of Suicide Day Conference**

*Program features local and national experts in grief care and survivors of suicide who will share their insights on grief, loss and suicide in a healing and supportive environment for newly bereaved survivors of suicide free of charge*

**San Jose, Calif., October 31, 2012** – Hospice of the Valley of Northern California in collaboration with the Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), will host the 14<sup>th</sup> annual International Survivors of Suicide Day Conference on Saturday, November 17, 2012 from 8:30 A.M. to 12:45 P.M. (PST) at Hospice of the Valley's Community Grief & Counseling Center located at 4850 Union Avenue, San Jose CA 95124. The program features local and national experts in grief care and survivors of suicide who will share their insights on grief, loss and suicide in a healing and supportive environment for newly bereaved survivors of suicide free of charge.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 37,000 people in the United States die by suicide each year and that over the course of our lifetime, 80 percent of us will

lose someone we know to suicide. In Santa Clara County death by suicide occurs on average every three days.

Presenting the local San Jose program during the first half of the morning on *Unleashing the Masks of Grief: How Do I Listen to My Internal Voice* are Brad Leary, LCSW, director of social services and counseling with grief counselor Kristina Gatto, LMFT, both from Hospice of the Valley's Community Grief & Counseling Center.

The national broadcast DVD program immediately follows the local program, which includes mental health experts and a panel of survivors who have lost husbands, wives, children, parents, friends and siblings. Facilitating the Q and A and group discussion after the national program is Jeannine Parsons, MFT Intern with Hospice of the Valley's Community Grief & Counseling Center.

"A person dies by suicide every 14 minutes in the United States, and with every suicide, there are family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers – 'survivors' – left behind to cope with the tragic loss," said Bob Gebbia, executive director of AFSP. "The International Survivors of Suicide Day connects thousands of survivors with others who have experienced a similar loss."

"We are honored to partner with the Greater San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and provide a comforting and supportive environment for bereaved survivors of suicide," said Sally Adelus, president and chief executive officer of Hospice of the Valley. "It is so important to let surviving family members, co-workers and friends know they are not alone."

"Many survivors of suicide often suffer alone and in silence," added Brad Leary, director of social services and counseling. "Like other individuals grieving a loss of a loved one, survivors of suicide need to share their story, express their loss, their feelings and process their grief in order to begin to heal."

Newly bereaved survivors of suicide are encouraged to attend this worldwide healing and supportive conference free of charge. To register online for the San Jose conference, visit: [hospicevalley.org/afspconference](http://hospicevalley.org/afspconference) or call Brad Leary at 1.408.559.5600, ext. 5164.

For more information about the featured national speakers, panelists and AFSP's International Survivors of Suicide Day, visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org). The national program is also available by webcast at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org) in English, Spanish, and French with an online chat offering an additional forum to connect survivors in a supportive setting.

### **About the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is the leading not-for-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research and education, and to reaching out to people with mood disorders and those impacted by suicide. For more information visit [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

### **About Hospice of the Valley**

Based in the heart of California's Silicon Valley, Hospice of the Valley provides end-of-life care and services, including hospice, palliative care and counseling for adults and children. Hospice of the Valley's Community Grief & Counseling Center provides individual counseling and loss-specific support groups to anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one. Hospice of the Valley publishes a community website for caregivers and families at [seriousillness.org/santaclaracounty](http://seriousillness.org/santaclaracounty). A nonprofit organization serving Santa Clara County since 1979, Hospice of the Valley honors all cultures, beliefs, values, and traditions and is committed to serving its diverse community and providing equitable access to care for all regardless of financial ability. For information, call 1.408.559.5600 or visit [hospicevalley.org](http://hospicevalley.org).

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