



Boys & Girls Club Hosts Samaritans' "Safe Place" Meetings

"Safe Place is an open group of caring people who have experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide. It offers a chance to share helpful resources, and to give and get support through the long grief process."

- Samaritans of Boston

by Dierdra Dostou

Every second Monday of the month, survivors gather at the South Boston Boys and Girls Club to share, support and heal. "Safe Place is ran by survi-

vors" explained Kim Kates, Director of Grief Support Services for the Samaritans of Boston. "Grief after suicide is unique and most survivors find comfort with other survivors."

"People don't often know when they need information or support and at what level, so Safe Place can meet people where they are at," explained Harry Duvall, Executive Director of the South Boston Boys and Girls Club. "The Club became more involved after one of our teens lost a sibling to suicide. In addition, one of our teens has volunteered substantial hours on their Teen Help Line."

Initiated in September

2008, the group meets every second Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. Any person who has been affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide is welcome.

Pattie McCormick from the South Boston Boys and Girls Club continued, "We felt there was a huge need for these meetings in this community and are very grateful for their support. The Club has had a long-term relationship with Samaritans since the suicide clusters in the 1990's." McCormick continued, "Meetings are facilitated by survivors who have had time to heal and rebuild their lives. Safe Place offers an opportunity to talk, or listen, to explore

feelings, to grieve, and to share. It is a space to be accepted and understood and a place that offers support and understanding".

In addition to bi-monthly meetings, Safe Place hosts an Annual Safe Place Memorial Service every January. On Monday, January 25, survivors and supporters are invited to attend a special "Grief and Loss After Suicide" workshop. Attendees will experience "a chance to hear about the unique issues survivors face after they lose a loved one to suicide, and how it impacts a community. This workshop will allow the attendees to participate in a discussion and leave with some new tools

to support survivors and themselves".

Safe Place meets at the South Boston Boys and Girls Club, 230 West Sixth Street, South Boston, every second Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information on Safe Place meetings and the Samaritans of Boston please contact Kim Kates at (617) 536-2460 x2237 or visit www.samaritansofboston.org. For more information on the South Boston Boys and Girls Club involvement, please contact Pattie McCormick or Harry Duvall at (617) 268-4301.

"You are not alone. We are here to listen." - Samaritans of Boston, 24-hour helpline: (617) 247-0220