

Widowed Persons Outreach

Helping and Healing



September/October 2020 Newsletter

John Winters and Georgia Stockdale, Co-Presidents
 Janet Bullinger, Treasurer
 Marti Bailey, Coordinator/Editor

Joanne Brainard, Vice President
 Nanci Wilkinson, Secretary
 Honora Precourt, Contributing Writer

Widowed Persons Outreach – Helping and Healing - is a free community service sponsored by Sibley Memorial Hospital, Joseph Gawler’s Sons, Inc. and the National United Methodist Church

Mailing Address:

Sibley Memorial Hospital
 5255 Loughboro Road, NW Washington, DC 20016
 Phone: 202-537-4942

www.wpodc.org

September 2020

**Registration is required for support groups. Groups are ongoing and virtual at this time.
 Please call 202-537-4942 to register and get information about attending.**

Sept. Board Meeting	Wednesday	Sept. 2	11 am. – 11:55 a.m.
Younger Widowed Persons Grief Group	Wednesday	Sept. 2	4 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Fireplace)	Wednesday	Sept. 9	2 – 3:30 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Christie)	Thursday	Sept. 10	1:30 – 3 p.m.
Younger Widowed Persons Grief Group	Wednesday	Sept. 16	4 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Fireplace)	Wednesday	Sept. 23	2 – 3:30 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Christie)	Thursday	Sept. 24	1:30 – 3 p.m.
WPO Happy Hour (Cocktails & Mocktails)	Thursday	Sept. 24	5 – 6 p.m.
Younger Widowed Persons Grief Group	Wednesday	Sept. 30	4 p.m.

You don't need to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step.



Martin Luther King, Jr.

October 2020

Registration is required for support groups. Groups are ongoing and virtual at this time.

Please call 202-537-4942 to register and get information about attending.

October Board Meeting	Wednesday	Oct. 7	11 – 11:55
Grief Support Group (Christie)	Thursday	Oct. 8	1:30 – 3 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Fireplace)	Wednesday	Oct. 14	2 – 3:30 p.m.
Younger Widowed Persons Grief Group	Wednesday	Oct. 14	4 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Christie)	Thursday	Oct. 22	1:30 – 3 p.m.
WPO Happy Hour (Cocktails & Mocktails)	Thursday	Oct. 22	5 – 6 p.m.
Grief Support Group (Fireplace)	Wednesday	Oct. 28	2 – 3:30 p.m.
Younger Widowed Persons Grief Group	Wednesday	Oct. 28	4 p.m.

Questions about WPO and COVID-19

Q: When will Widowed Persons Outreach (WPO) resume meeting in person?

A: The need for virtual meetings will likely be necessary for quite a while since we do not yet have a cure or vaccine for COVID-19. Many WPO members have risk factors for the virus. Out of an abundance of caution, both grief support and social groups will be meeting virtually.



Update your Email!

This Newsletter is being sent via e-mail to those WPO members for whom we have e-mail addresses and mailed by postal service to the other members. If you wish to be removed from the WPO US Postal mailing list or wish to receive an e-mailed newsletter please let us know by sending an e-mail to: kengordon@alum.mit.edu. In addition, if opportunities come up to get together, or we send out a reminder to get together, providing an email will keep you up-to date.



WPO Contributions

The Board of Directors of WPO want to express their heartfelt thanks to the below-listed donors, who in the month of July and August, contributed to our success by assisting in the purchase of:

- Professional services, including organizing peer-led assistance
- Printing newsletters, stationery, remittance envelopes and U.S. postage
- Service for annual and bi-annual luncheons
- Connections for outreach to the recently widowed

Susan Absher

Brad Jay Bickford

John L. Birdas

Dorothy L. Black

Susan B. Kaplan

Mayanne S. Karmin

Klaus Klatt

Patricia Mertz

Kenneth A. Pettijohn

Linda A. Rohrbach

Patricia E. Simpich

Mary Weaver

Roseanne Clausen

Barbara T. Collins

Ingrid Margrave

Peggy Misback

Nancy B. Ordway

In memory of Philip CLausen

In memory of Phillip L. Collins

In memory of Robert Margrave

In memory of E'va Winters

In memory of Roderic Edward Ordway

Braving this Pandemic

We are now in the 5th month of the pandemic. We are each being impacted, if not by the virus itself, certainly by the many ways our lives keep having to change. Even if the virus doesn't touch us personally, we are being affected by all the distress and crises around us. This can make our grounding feel very shaky.

For some of us getting through each day is hard work. How do we handle being in a world that feels so out of control? How do we tolerate having our freedoms limited? How can we protect ourselves and those we love? These are some of our everyday concerns.

Because of this now widespread virus millions of us are being cut off from life as we knew it. We are unwittingly being held back from seeing people and participating in activities that we took for granted. The end date and the future are unknowable.

We need to recognize that we can take charge of this moment. As I wrote in my book *YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUFFER*, "We must realize that we always have a choice to make, a serious and conscious choice, as to how we will react to distressing life events."

Of course we have feelings about our altered circumstances, but we don't have to be dominated by our reactions. We don't have to deny our unease or our pain, but we need to manage our relationship to our discomfort. If we are willing, we can ultimately rise above it. We don't have to feel victimized by this situation. We are not victims. But if we don't consciously manage our reactions, suffering can be all consuming and facing the future can seem bleak.

We can choose to change the channel on our thoughts, choose to distract ourselves from fear, despair, and negativity, and choose to connect with others to lift our perspective. If it seems we cannot get control of our feelings, we might seek help through psychotherapy or consider seeing our physician to start taking antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications. Most importantly, we need not stay stuck in misery.

Because home confinement and closed opportunities are our reality today, we have to consciously and responsibly manage our attitude about these limitations. Acceptance of this new reality as well as gratitude and appreciation for what we have rather than worry, resentment and disappointment about what is missing will support us to get through this time.

We don't need to despair or feel gypped by our circumstances. We can learn to enjoy our time at home and appreciate being free to relax. We can uplift ourselves by living one day at a time and adding creativity, exercise, reading, learning, meditation, and sharing with others.

This is an opportunity for personal growth and mastery. Since we have no idea how long this pandemic will last, we need to consciously empower ourselves every day to stay grounded. We may not be certain of how to do this, but we can learn to cope with this pandemic and all the challenges it presents. We don't have to feel like victims. Stand up for yourself and handle this the best way you can!

Printed by permission by JUDY TATELBAUM, LCSW

Living Alone

The SSA invites you to join a discussion group on coping with living alone. All are welcome. Living Alone presents its own opportunities and issues, whether the reason is by choice or loss of a spouse/ partner. Experiences show us that there is value to those living alone from sharing experiences and needs about their special situation. Living Alone meets the third Monday of every month. The group is moderated by Ken Gordon. For the Zoom link, register by calling SSA at 202.364.7602, or by emailing to kengordon@alum.mit.edu. Until further notice the group is meeting online via Zoom. Meets at Noon on Sept. 21 and Oct. 19.

WPO Zoom Happy Hour Cocktails and Mocktails

Join WPO friends and meet new ones at the **Cocktails and Mocktails** session on the 4th Thursday of September and October from 5 – 6 p.m. Make your favorite cocktail, or serve yourself wine or beer, or, if you prefer a mocktail or iced tea, please still join us! Have your drink of choice ready to go and join for a few “icebreakers” to get to know people. All Widowed Persons Outreach members are welcome to attend. The Zoom invitation will go out by email, so please provide your email to Ken Gordon at kengordon@alum.mit.edu.

Consider Supporting WPO Financially

Support is especially important during the pandemic. Please consider supporting WPO through financial contributions or planned giving. WPO is funded 100 percent by donations and does not charge money for any grief services. You may honor someone or give a donation in memory of someone special. Investments in WPO help us continue this important work. If you have questions about how your philanthropy interests may intersect with WPO's support of persons in grief, please call Marti Bailey at 202 660-5658. WPO is a tax exempt organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed under the IRS Code Section 501(c) 3.

Did you know that you can now use PayPal at www.wpodc.org to make your donations? And that PayPal will allow you to do a regularly scheduled monthly donation that may be stopped at any time you choose? Please call 202-660-5658 if you need help.

*Widowed Persons Outreach
Sibley Memorial Hospital
5255 Loughboro Road, NW
Washington, DC 20016*