A special thanks to all of our generous donors for supporting our efforts!

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers and supporters who made the 8th Annual Hearts, Clubs & Aces Golf Event a huge success!

A Message from Goldie? Jeannine, B.C.

I have allowed myself to be inspired by the lives of those I lost

I remember the day my father died as if it were yesterday. I was 14. My family and I were preparing to go on a business trip in our new plane, but my mother didn’t want my brother and me to miss school. Then at the last minute she changed her mind. We arrived just as the plane was taking off. I watched the runway waving good-bye. That was the last time I ever saw my dad. His plane crashed somewhere in Malibu Canyon, CA on the way back.

For the longest time I held onto the belief that somehow he still was out there and that he was okay.

Although it’s been many years, my father’s death still has a profound effect on my life. His words of constant encouragement ring in my ears to this very day. They are my inspiration to rise above the roadblocks of life, to be supported as a worker and a friend, and to be the best I can be.

We What We Do
ACCESS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to providing critical social and medical and air ambulance services with volunteers who have lived through similar life-altering tragedies years earlier. ACCESS has over 250 Trained Volunteer Grief Mentors on-call to provide free peer-to-peer care from the minute an aviation disaster occurs, for as long as the grieving need support.

We Couldn’t Do It Without You!
ACCESS relies on your generous support to provide free care to those who call us for help. A donation of any size can make a difference. What We Do

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Belonging through ACCESS: A Connection with Joan Lunden

Joan’s story continued...

On July 17, 1996, while I was reporting on the TWA Flight 800 disaster as host of Good Morning America, I was called into the control room. They had someone on the phone frantically trying to see if his twin brother Jed was in the crash. Jed was scheduled to be on the later flight to Paris. The producers of the show contacted TWA and confirmed our worst fear: that Jed, our childhood best friend and first boyfriend, was on that plane.

Never before in my twenty years on Good Morning America had I gone on the air unable to speak, but that morning my co-host, Charlie Gibson, explained to the viewers that I needed a few moments to regain my composure.

A year before my father’s crash, two of his colleagues, who were private plane pilots, had crashed and died. It was my father who went to their homes to tell their wives. In the days following my dad’s crash, those two women, practically lived at our house, helping us through the first few weeks.

And that is the real magic of ACCESS, a program where role models who have experienced the same type of loss can uniquely help others navigate their own journeys.

The Hardest Work

I Have Ever Done

by Marilyn Kausner

No matter how I try to brace myself, the pain of losing a loved one never gets easier. For my daughter, Elly, the pain of losing her best friend, my husband, Jon, was particularly difficult. After Jon died on October 10, 2001, Elly lived as a shell of a person for months. She could not even bring herself to use my name or talk about her father. The grief made her unable to cope with even the most basic tasks.

ACCESS continues doing what it does best: helping people cope with their present and prepare for the future.

Recently I attended ACCESS’ 9th Annual Hearts, Clubs & Aces golf fundraiser in California. I sat in a room full of strangers but I felt a certain sense of belonging. Then when the guest of honor Jon Lunden spoke, I knew I was in the right place. She told of the family’s lost her father took and the impact it had on her and her family. I had of course seen her on Good Morning America, but when she told her story, I felt a connection. Her story is early similar to my own. I no longer alone on my journey as I realized there are countless others whose hearts also feel heavy and are raw with emotion from this type of tragedy. This is what ACCESS is all about. As the night came to a close and the last auction item was claimed, I left knowing that ACCESS continues doing what it does best: helping people cope with the present and prepare for the future.

Joan Lunden told her father on a private plane crash on 9/11.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2013

Elly & her nephew Connor

Elly shows the world that one person can make a difference, and the enduring success of ACCESS is a testament to her passion to help others.

When you meet Heidi you cannot help but be struck by a sense that she is carrying on in the face of a tragic event. It was, I was impressed by how she was able to find new strengths after losing her fiancé on Flight 800 and turn her sorrow into a source of joy.

A terrible tragic moment, though difficult at the time, can become a source of strength and courage. Like Heidi, I have allowed myself to be inspired by the lives of those I lost. Some of us have the opportunity to finish our work here, and thankfully some of us are taken way too soon.

To my dad: I remember every word you ever said, Dad. To my dear friend Jed: Your devotion and sacrifice gave me the courage to pursue my dream in New York. Without you both, I would not be who I am today.

Join us for our 9th Annual Hearts, Clubs & Aces Golf Tournament, Dinner, and Silent/Live Auction!

More than just the usual charity golf tournament or fundraising auction, our Hearts, Clubs & Aces event has participants, sponsors, and volunteers alike chalking up the data on their calendars every year. This memorable day includes golf, games, prizes, a cocktail party, silent auction, dinner, and an exciting live auction!

Register online at www.accesshelp.org

The Hardest Work I Have Ever Done

by Marilyn Kausner

Four years in, it’s still the hardest work I have ever done or will do. My best friend lost her son in a motorcycle accident told me she had to live her life so that he won’t look down from heaven feeling guilty that his death ruined her. That is some good motivation. For me, it translates into investing what I can into those I still have. I have had the honor of working with the ACCESS Volunteer Grief Mentor for many years and ACCESS is one of the best peer-to-peer bereavement support programs in the world.

Dr. Ken Druck’s Tips for Surviving Holidays, Birthdays, Anniversaries & Other Special Days After a Loss

Often we approach special days like birthdays, holidays and anniversaries with apprehension—too, these dates remind us that we will never see or speak with loved one again. The key to survival is being self-compassionate. Take a deep breath. The best thing you can do for yourself is to be kind to yourself. Remember, surviving a special day is just one step in the process of grief. Healing is forever and this is only one day in your journey. Here are a few suggestions for those of you who wish to approach the special day with something specific planned.

The days before...

- Make plans and reduce the pressure and anxiety often we approach special days like birthdays, holidays and anniversaries with apprehension.
- Set realistic & reasonable expectations for the day.
- Do things that allow you to relax.
- Get the emotional support you need.
- Give yourself permission to talk about your loved one.
Belonging through ACCESS: A Connection with Joan Lunden by Debi Hawkins

I lost my dad in a private plane crash off Crooked Island in the outer islands of the Bahamas. This is the sort of thing you hear about on the news, the sort of thing that doesn’t happen to you. It’s something you learn and become equipped for, because it will never happen to us... until it does. In a split second my life changed in ways that I had never considered. The loss of a parent at the age of twenty-eight is a tragedy. My siblings and I were left with a large hole in our lives and in the fabric of ‘it’s nothing. You can describe to someone who has not had a similar experience.

Recently I attended ACCESS’ 8th Annual Hearts, Clubs & Aces golf fundraiser in California. I sat in a room full of strangers but I felt a certain sense of belonging. Then when the guest of honor Joan Lunden spoke, I knew I was in the right place. She told of the family’s fight her father took and the impact it had on her and her family. I had of course seen her on Good Morning America, but when she told her story, I felt a connection. Her story is early to my own. I was no longer alone on my journey as I realized there were countless others whose hearts also feel heavy and are raw with emotion from this type of tragedy. This is what ACCESS is all about. As the night came to a close and the last auction item was claimed, I left knowing that ACCESS continues doing what it does best: helping people cope with the present and prepare for the future.

Joan’s story continued...

Joan & Heidi at Camp Good Belonging through ACCESS: A Connection with Joan Lunden by Debi Hawkins

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Joan’s story continued...

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A Message from Joan, Access's Founder:

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I remember the day my father died as if it were yesterday. I was 14. My family was on our first business trip in our new plane, but my mother didn’t want my brother and me to miss school. Then at the last minute she changed her mind. We arrived just as the plane was taking off. I can still smell the runway, hear the wind, see the trees whiz by. That was the last time I ever saw my dad. His plane crashed somewhere in Malibu Canyon, CA, on the way back.

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Some of the most important work ACCESS does before an air disaster occurs. Our freindships have taught us just how important the first few interactions after an air disaster can be.

This is because ACCESS provides courses based on the hundreds of case studies of our own experiences in preparing and equipping flight crews and care teams that respond to air disasters so that they can provide the most sensitive and effective care possible.

To learn more and get involved, please visit www.accesshelp.org

Dr. Joan Lunden

ACCESS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals suffering from the emotional and commercial and military air disasters with volunteers who have lived through the trauma of sudden, unexpected loss. ACCESS has over 250 Volunteer Grief Mentors who can offer free peer-to-peer care from the minute an air disaster occurs, as long as the grieving need support.

ACCESS is ACCESS possible

The 9th Annual Hearts, Clubs & Aces Air Disaster Charity Golf Tournament.

www.accesshelp.org

On behalf of all of us whose lives have been tragically changed in an instant, I thank you.

www.accesshelp.org

From the bottom of my heart, I thank all the amazing people who make ACCESS possible by giving us the precious gift of survival after their loved one’s death.

ACCESS founder, Hard Graft