



# Thao Nguyen Foundation Inc. Newsletter

13<sup>th</sup> Issue  
December 2018

TOGETHER, WE BRING LIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

IN THIS ISSUE

## Greetings from the President

Nhung Hendy

As I write this column, Thanksgiving holiday is just two days away. It is hard to believe that another year is about to end. I'm happy to report that the Foundation has markedly increased its visibility and impact over the second half of this year. Please read on.

Since our last newsletter published on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, we have sponsored (Bronze level) the Howard County Out of the Darkness Walk on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 for the second year in a row. We sponsored our first juried art exhibition, Shining Light, held on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Grey Matter Art Space in Baltimore city. Last but not least, we co-hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day with Towson University Counseling Center on 11/17/2018 under the financial auspice of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

As the holiday season is upon us, please consider making your year-end tax-deductible donation to TN Foundation. Donations can be made securely on our web site [www.tnscholarshipforthearts.org](http://www.tnscholarshipforthearts.org). New this year is that a donor has generously

agreed to match \$3 for every \$1 dollar you donate up to \$20,000.

There are also two other ways to support the Foundation. First, when you shop for holiday gifts on Amazon, make sure you use the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) link. When you first shop using this link, you can choose TN Foundation as the charity of your choice. Each time you shop, Amazon will donate .5% of the proceeds to our foundation. For those of you wondering about the price differences, rest assured that there are absolutely no price differences between the [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) sites.

Second, when you buy or sell on eBay, you can designate a portion of your proceeds to TN Foundation. We could not have achieved this much without your donations and support. On behalf of the Board of Directors, please accept my heart-felt thanks for your continued support. Have a healthy holiday season and a blessed 2019!



TN Foundation Booth at Howard County Out of the Darkness Walk (9/30/2018)

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### TN Foundation Board of Directors

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## Shining Light Juried Art Show

By Nhung Hendy



Nhung Hendy with Richard Pence, Third Place Winner

This year, we launched the first Juried Art Show whose theme was “Shining Light”. The event attracted many budding and seasoned artists alike. There were close to 100 entries, of which 57 were accepted. The Best in Show prize of \$500 went to Greg McLemore “From the Water’s Edge, near the hospital” – Oil on canvas. Blythe Williams, a Towson University student in the Art Department won second place (\$250) for her digital print “Yikes, the Sun”. Richard Pence, also a Towson University Art Student won third place (\$150) for his digital print “Reminder #7”. You can view all the winning artworks at the Foundation website

<http://tnscholarshipforthearts.org/art-show.html>. Congratulations to all winners.

The event was very well attended and a great success in terms of increasing the foundation’s visibility. It could not have been possible with the help of so many people. A big thank you goes out to Jenée Mateer for having taken on this initiative from conception to fruition. I would also like to thank Jordan Faye Block and Dave Herman for serving as jurors to this art show. Thank you to so many volunteers for their help in making sure the show runs smoothly. A special thanks to Hideko Numayama for working the payment booth and Lori Ellison for working the bar. We raised close to \$500 from the sale of art work during the 3 hours the show stayed open on 10/13/2018. Finally, I would like to thank all students and artists for submitting their work to the show.



Thanks to all who came out to enjoy and buy art to support TN Foundation on 10/13/2018



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND  
HAVE A GREAT NEW YEAR!**  
*Thank you for all your  
support.*



## Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

By James Manley

"Hi, I'm Nhung Hendy, and I lost my daughter to suicide just a few years ago." With these powerful words Nhung Hendy began the Suicide Survivor's workshop on Saturday November 17. We began with lunch available at 12 but the workshop got started in earnest at 1 PM with the 11-minute movie, "A Daughter's Journey," available for free online at <https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/survivor-day/survivor-day-documentaries/>. In this short movie, Sarah talks about what it was like as her father tried to get help for his mental health condition: "I never knew which dad was going to show up that day: happy dad, angry dad, crying dad...." She was only 13 when he lost his battle with depression, and it has taken her a long time to come to terms with it, as much as she can.

After viewing the film, the group, about 21 people strong, weighed in with their replies to Nhung's questions, such as, "What emotions did Sarah experience in the film that you can relate to as she grieved the loss of her father?" There was a great variety among the people there: some people had lost loved ones as many as 13 years ago, while some had been coping for just a few months. People had lost brothers, wives, sons, mothers.... When the group discussion had wound down, we continued the event with discussion in smaller groups. While it is always hard to see the pain that people are feeling, the feeling of togetherness in the room, the opportunity to share and sympathize made this opportunity for the community to come together. One woman talked about her need to change jobs after a loss: just working for a corporation doesn't feel like it's enough anymore, and she wants to transition into a career with more meaning. It's not easy after many years of work to start something new, and we all wish it could have been brought on by something more pleasant, but we were pleased to be part of some new positive energy as the group separated. Thank you to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention for their financial support; thanks also to the Towson University

Counseling Center and Dr. Greg Reising for letting us use the facilities and supporting the event with words of welcome. Most of all, thanks to Nhung Hendy for stepping up to host the event when the counselor assigned to it was unavailable at the last minute. It wouldn't have happened without your support, Nhung!



Nhung shared her experience with a suicide loss survivor on Survivor Day (11/17/2018)

IF YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE

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## Research summary in treating Bipolar Disorder

*Summarized by Nhung Hendy from Journal of Affective Disorders*

A group of Chinese researchers conducted a quantitative review including 11 randomized controlled clinical trials with 692 bipolar disorder patients. They found that there was a moderate risk of bias assessment. The use of antidepressants in treating bipolar patients either as a standalone therapy or in combination with mood stabilizer was found to be better than placebo in reducing the number of new depressive episodes. Further this treatment benefit was stronger in patients with Bipolar II than in patients with Bipolar I. Note that Bipolar II patients do not experience manic episodes as severe as do Bipolar I patients. Therefore, long-term use of antidepressants may help reduce new depressive episodes without significant risks of new manic

episodes in Bipolar II patients relative to Bipolar I patients. However, there was some risk of affective switch in using antidepressants as a standalone therapy compared to when using it in combination with mood stabilizer in diminishing manic and hypomanic episodes.

Meditation such as sitting meditation and yoga exercises has been in existence for decades. Mindfulness meditation, which focuses on paying attention to bodily sensations, emotions and thoughts while accepting a non-judgmental attitude has just been extended to the field of psychiatry and recently, a group of researchers from around the world took the first step in quantifying the benefits of mindfulness meditation in treating Bipolar patients. Specifically, this group of researchers from Taiwan, Brazil, the U.K., U.S. and Spain meta-analyzed twelve clinical trials including three controlled studies with a sample size of 132 and nine uncontrolled studies with a sample size of 142. They found that within the controlled and uncontrolled studies, mindfulness meditation significantly reduced depression and anxiety, but not manic episodes. However, compared to the control group, mindfulness meditation did not reduce depressive symptoms. Note that there were only three studies with controlled groups, so this finding awaits more future research to confirm or disconfirm it. Overall, mindfulness meditation shows promising results in treating bipolar patients at least when it comes to reducing depressive and anxiety symptoms.

## References

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