

# STORIES OF HOPE

## “Believing”

### An Access and Crisis Line Counselor’s Story



On November 14, 2010, I participated in my first Save a Life Walk. I decided to attend after I had a touching conversation with a gentleman who called the Access and Crisis Line. This caller made a serious suicide attempt in the past, but he is now involved with outreach for suicide prevention. His story moved me deeply, and his commitment to helping others was refreshingly honest and heartfelt.

As I walked into Balboa Park on that Sunday morning, I immediately felt a rush of excitement! I was greeted with colorful signs and banners, tables set up with literature and resources, and people in matching T-shirts with a sense of anticipation. During the course of the walk, I listened to those who lost loved ones through suicide, and they shared memories so real and palpable. With their carefully selected words, I was struck by a sobering understanding of that which I did not previously comprehend: the families and friends who

were here were joined by the unthinkable events of the past. As a crisis counselor, my job is to try and prevent people from committing suicide; this was the whole other side of the equation.

Throughout the walk, families and friends cheered each other on and called out their loved one’s names. Believing. As teams burst through the end zone, they embraced one another and their supporters. This was followed by speeches, extensions of gratitude, and beautiful music. White doves were then released into the cloudless blue sky, carrying a message of love and hope to the heavens.



Overall, I was swept away by the collectiveness of an event where a unique community walked together to bring awareness to the greater community. This was an environment of acceptance where people were able to share what they used to hide. To me, the walk symbolizes the bridge between those lost to us and those left behind, and it made me appreciate the work I do on the Access and Crisis Line so much more...