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## **Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation To Host First Annual National Conference on Widowhood**

*Conference slated for July 17-19, 2009 in San Diego, California*

**(Simi Valley, CA)** March 17, 2009 – The Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation (SSLF), a non-profit organization committed to providing compassionate community support to widows, and anyone grieving the loss of a loved one, will host its first annual National Conference on Widowhood from July 17-19, 2009 in San Diego, California. “The purpose of the conference is to provide widows with an opportunity to celebrate all they have accomplished; while looking forward to what they are yet to become,” said Michele Hernandez, executive director for the Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation. “We’re expecting 2,000 widows to join us from across the country, and around the world, for what promises to be an inspiring, hope-filled event.”

An extraordinary lineup of speakers, most of whom are widows, are slated to appear, such as:

- Dr. Michele Reiss, Ph. D. – recently publicly acknowledged as the psychotherapist working with Dr. Randy Pausch and his wife Jai;
- Margaret Owen, Director of Widows for Peace and Democracy, United Kingdom;
- Matt Loeglin, a widower (whose story was featured in People Magazine) whose wife died shortly following the birth of their child;
- Tim Golden, LCSW – author of *Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing*;
- Taryn Davis – founder of the *American Widow Project* Web site and support center, and creator of *The American Widow Project*; a documentary about the stories of six young military widows;
- Pamela Gabbay, M.A., FT – Director of Morning Star Center for Grieving Children;
- Marilyn Kagan, LCSW and Dr. Neil Einbund, Ph.D. – renown psychotherapists;
- AnnMarie Ginella – founder/editor of *Widow-Speak.org*; and
- Michele Neff Hernandez – executive director of Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation and creator of [www.widowsbond.com](http://www.widowsbond.com)

In addition, the conference will present programs focused on giving widows the tools they need to rebuild their lives following the devastating loss of a spouse. “By joining our hearts through the shared experience of loss, and encouraging each other to create a life of purpose and joy—we can change the face of widowhood for generations of women to come,” said Ms. Hernandez. The conference will be held at the beautiful San Diego Marriott & Marina, situated on the San Diego Bay.

The tentative agenda for the National Conference for Widowhood will include – a meet and greet reception for widows (a chance for widows signed up in the Widow Match program to meet their matches); an outdoor benefit concert; a general session; thirty-two break-out sessions featuring a variety of topics and speakers; a formal gala, and the First Annual Widow Dash 5k Run/Walk. “We are thrilled about the great schedule of

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**National Conference on Widowhood**

programs and events planned for this important gathering, and we are especially excited to announce the screening of the critically acclaimed documentary *The American Widow Project* during the conference,” commented Ms. Hernandez.

The Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation is focused on creating and implementing universal programs dedicated to the ideals of hope and healing; addressing the emotional and practical needs of those dealing with loss. “There are so many people who are struggling to cope with the daily reality of grief; in addition to the pain of loss, they also have to find first the desire, and then the courage to begin living again after the death of a spouse or family member. The Foundation will offer reassurance, through programs such as the National Conference on Widowhood, that life is possible after such heartbreak,” said Ms. Hernandez.

The SSLF – [www.sslf.org](http://www.sslf.org) will serve as a venue for grieving people to share their stories and to reach out to others searching for answers, and a ray of hope. In addition, in the near future, the site will include valuable resources, such as support groups for adults and children in areas across the US, reading lists for a variety of topics associated with loss, a library of current website links that offer on-line support, a calendar of events addressing individuals coping with a variety of types of loss, and more.

For more information about the first annual National Conference for Widowhood or to register for the conference contact Michele Hernandez via email at [contact@ssl.org](mailto:contact@ssl.org) or visit the Web site at [www.sslf.org](http://www.sslf.org). The Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization based in Simi Valley, California.

***About Michele Neff Hernandez:***



*Michele Hernandez is a freelance writer and motivational speaker. After losing her husband to a tragic accident in 2005, she has made reaching out to other widows her mission. She resides in Simi Valley, CA with her three children. For more information about Michele Neff Hernandez visit [www.widowsbond.com](http://www.widowsbond.com).*

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