Suicide Widows Project

When immediate support fades, what comes next?

We must learn from people widowed by suicide, identify their needs, and expand support.

An overlooked group. An opportunity to act.

After a death by suicide, surviving spouses and life partners often become the center of support for children, family members, and communities while navigating their own profound loss. Yet their long-term experiences—and the help they need beyond the immediate crisis—remain insufficiently understood.

The Suicide Widows Project (SWP) is a survivor-led 501(c)(3) public charity founded in 2026 by Leda Cunningham, whose husband died by suicide in 2014. Through interviews and collaboration with researchers, advocates, and people with lived experience, the SWP is building a clearer picture of what support is missing, and how to fill the gaps.

Why this work matters

Suicide prevention focuses on saving lives before a death occurs. *Postvention*, a less familiar word to many, focuses on those affected afterward. These are connected, but not competing, priorities. Better support for survivors of suicide loss may also strengthen prevention, because exposure to suicide places some survivors at increased risk. The SWP brings attention and practical knowledge to the often-overlooked postvention part of the suicide care continuum.

Support for survivors of suicide loss remains fragmented, and the most critical resources can be difficult to find, especially after the first weeks and months. The SWP will offer service providers, communities, and family and friends clear recommendations for how to better serve surviving spouses and partners—recommendations that go beyond conventional short-term bereavement approaches and are based directly on the feedback from survivors of suicide loss.

A personal reason to begin

Leda created the SWP after experiencing how support can diminish long before grief or practical needs end. Her own experience helps establish trust with people who may be reluctant to speak openly about suicide loss. Their voices—not assumptions about what survivors need—are the starting point for this work.

An opportunity for values-aligned giving

Your charitable gift helps turn deeply personal experiences into a shared knowledge base and an actionable plan for better long-term care. For individuals and families who prioritize mental health, stronger communities, evidence-informed solutions, and the voices of people affected by tragedy, the SWP offers an unusually focused way to make a difference. Your gift helps ensure that the experiences of surviving spouses and partners inform the most critical new resources. As a lifelong nonprofit professional and single mom since 2014, Leda knows how to make a dollar go a long way. Your gift will directly support an efficient budget and more than 300 hours of volunteer service donated in Year 1.

From listening to lasting support

Year 1 | Build and listen

Establish a Board and advisory relationships; refine an Interview Guide with researchers and survivors; recruit participants; and conduct confidential interviews with 40 people widowed by suicide.

Year 2 | Understand and connect

Interpret interview findings; engage survivors, researchers, and postvention leaders in Needs Assessment; identify common gaps and promising responses; and share emerging insights with people positioned to act and advocate.

Year 3 | Publish and mobilize

Develop and publish an Action Plan for expanding long-term support; mobilize partners around recommendations; and identify opportunities to carry the work forward.

What success looks like

By the end of 2028, the SWP will contribute new knowledge about long-term suicide bereavement, a practical Action Plan informed by survivors of suicide loss, stronger connections among organizations and individuals working in postvention, and an opt-in community of people interested in future collaboration and research.

A transparent path to impact

Join the circle of Sustaining Donors

So far, six Sustaining Donors have given between $1,000 and $25,000 to help the SWP succeed. We are looking for six more Sustaining Donors to contribute a total of $30,000 by December 31, 2026.

Be the ripple effect

Consider making an unrestricted year-end gift, a multi-year commitment, or an introduction to a family foundation that shares the SWP's commitment to caring for people impacted by the loss of a spouse or partner to suicide.

Let's talk

Leda Cunningham | Founder & Executive Director
leda@suicidewidows.org

The Suicide Widows Project is an IRS-designated 501(c)(3) public charity. EIN: 33-3568737.
Mailing address: 4915 Arendell St., Suite J, Box 239, Morehead City, NC 28557.

Charitable-giving decisions and potential tax benefits should be discussed with your tax or financial advisor.