



## SAFE TABLES OUR PRIORITY

P.O. Box 4352  
Burlington, VT 05406  
www.SafeTables.org / 800-350-STOP

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Burlington, VT  
Permit #795

*Your gift to S.T.O.P.  
carries on this important  
work. Please give today.*

## DEDICATION

### S.T.O.P. dedicates this newsletter to Bethany May Pelkofer

October 16, 1988 – June 10, 1991

Bethany's mother Vikki Pelkofer  
writes:

Here is a poem Bethany's older  
brother wrote. My son has had to go  
through everything you would go  
through in school without his sister.  
He has three brothers, but they are  
so much younger that he is all alone.  
I really think he would be a different  
person if Bethany wouldn't have died.



*In the stars we see her face,  
smiling down upon her grace.  
In the heavens she will stay,  
in our hearts she will always remain.  
On this earth for a few short years,  
her laughter we will always hear.  
Body gone but soul will stay,  
we'll always remember BETHANY MAY.*

**“ It's our act of  
love to those not  
personally impacted,  
on behalf of those  
who were most  
impacted; who paid  
the ultimate price,  
their lives. Together  
we will make a  
difference; we will  
get the necessary  
changes done.  
Because we won't  
give up. Because we  
do it for love.”**

**- Nancy Donley,  
S.T.O.P. President  
Conference Keynote, July 2003**

# Safe Tables Our Priority



## NEWS

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- ▶ **CDC Stats: Most Illnesses Befall Kids**
- ▶ **Report & Photos from S.T.O.P.'s Conference**
- ▶ **Founder Remembers 10 Years Ago**
- ▶ **Dealing With The Aftermath of Foodborne Disease**

**“A new presidential  
campaign is under  
way, and voters should  
listen carefully. Are  
any of these  
candidates brave  
enough to talk about  
hamburgers?”**

*- William Greider  
“Victory at McDonald's”  
The Nation, 8/18/2003*

**S.T.O.P.  
SAFE TABLES OUR  
PRIORITY**

Autumn 2003

[www.SafeTables.org](http://www.SafeTables.org)



## S.T.O.P. Honors Founders and Food Safety Champions

**T**ears, smiles and hugs were plentiful Saturday night, July 26<sup>th</sup> as the first S.T.O.P. Awards Ceremony took place. Glistening “stained glass” candleholders crafted by the children of S.T.O.P.'s newest chapter, K.E.V.I.N., cast a mellow light as S.T.O.P. recognized the courage, initiative, and commitment of Kathi Allen, Roni Rudolph Austin, Steve Cockerham, Elaine Dodge, Joe and Dorothy Dolan, Carol Tucker Foreman, Mary Heersink, Suzanne Kiner, Michael and Diana Nole, Bonnie Rock, Donna Rosenbaum, and Fred and Annalese Thomas. This indomitable group was recognized for their respective roles in co-founding, a decade ago, an organization which has become one of the loudest voices in the national food safety policy discussion, providing essential resources for victims and initiating and achieving numerous food safety reforms.



*Kathi Allen, Donna Rosenbaum, Nancy Donley,  
Roni Rudolph Austin and Barbara Kowalczyk at  
S.T.O.P.'s summer conference in Madison.*

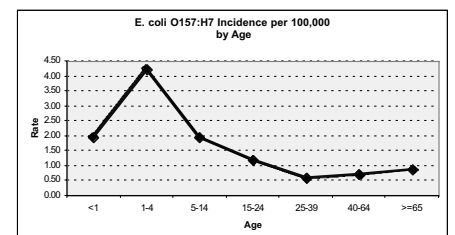
Nancy Donley, Laurie Girand, and Heather Klinkhamer were recognized with the first-ever “S.T.O.P. Food Safety Champion Awards” for outstanding achievements individually and collectively to make food safer and stop foodborne disease tragedies over the last decade. *E. coli* survivor and S.T.O.P. Board Member Laura Day presented the award and explained that while many people have joined in S.T.O.P.'s efforts and contributed to its successes, the commitment of the aforementioned “Champions” has been truly exceptional and an inspiration to those who work alongside them. Then, on behalf of S.T.O.P.'s founders and leadership, Kathi Allen presented the first annual “Outstanding New

*Continued on page 4*

## New Stats: Children Suffer Most Often

46% of reported foodborne illness cases impact children according to recent CDC data. See more graphs on page 4.

Source: CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly,  
May 2, 2003, Vol. 50, No 53. Pp 14-15, 43.  
[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5053.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5053.pdf)





## ACTIVIST PROFILE: KRISTI THACKER, ELDON, MO

**O**ur 5 year old, Savana, became sick on Wednesday, vomiting only 1 time that day but complaining of stomach pains that would make her lay down. She had a poor appetite for the next few days but no further vomiting. On Saturday morning, she began to vomit again and was having painful, crampy, diarrhea stools. Sunday was a repeat of Saturday but she became quite lethargic. She tried to drink but everything came right back up. She would fall back to a restless sleep inbetween bouts of vomiting. Of course this was Sunday so we waited until Monday morning to go to the family doctor in our small town. I knew once I saw her skin color in the fluorescent lights of the clinic that she did not look right. Her color was "off". The doctor felt that she might have hepatitis and asked us to take her to the nearest hospital 30 miles away.

Bloodwork and urine samples taken in the ER showed that she was in renal and liver failure. They had started IV fluids when we walked in the door and she was beginning to swell up from fluid overload by then. They stopped the fluids and immediately transferred her by ambulance to the University Childrens Hospital in Columbia. Thank God the doctors there were aware of the current treatments for E. coli and HUS. They informed us that we were in for a long ride as her condition would only get worse before it got better... we racked our brains trying to think of where she could have picked up this germ.

Because of my own investigating, we found

that our local grocery store had a recall of meat for *E. coli* O157. I still had the "infested" meat in my freezer as I had repackaged it into smaller portions at home. Needless to say, my husband and I were furious that our small town grocery store had not notified the public about the possibly deadly meat that we had in our freezer. We had purchased the meat with a special "cashsaver" card that allows us to get discounted prices in the store. That card keeps track of the sale items you buy and how much you have saved over time.

**"Our daughter suffered through 8 days of hell, 2 blood transfusions, endless vomiting and excruciating abdominal pain because the store could not take the time to notify its customers adequately."**

Our daughter suffered through 8 days of hell, 2 blood transfusions, endless vomiting and excruciating abdominal pain because the store could not take the time to notify its customers adequately. She is 6 now and has just visited her nephrologist and been given a fairly clean bill of health. A year has passed but her emotional scars are very evident. She absolutely freaks out if she has to visit any doctor or medical facility. Her appetite is still very poor, she refuses to eat red meat of any kind. The doctor says that she has a 1 in 4 chance of developing high blood pressure as she grows up but he feels that her kidneys and liver have recovered quite well considering how sick she became. She suffered from anemia and fatigue for at least 10 months after she left the hospital.

I can only say that our family will never be the same again. It is hard to feel safe ... We are still reeling from the fear that it could happen again.



## The Birth of S.T.O.P.

*continued from page 3*

end of the room. Then, I made the long walk down halls where countless children lay battling for their lives...all because of a hamburger. The insanity of it all was incomprehensible...Returning home I hugged my four children and tried to answer their questions about their friend. I couldn't.

The images wouldn't leave me. I began researching the "why." I wanted to know. I had to know. When I returned to ICU, the families wanted to know. So, I shared my research findings. They were enraged to discover this was the 22nd outbreak in our nation's history and that many in the meat industry considered *E. coli* O157:H7 more of "PR problem than a public threat." On that day, the seed idea of S.T.O.P. was born—the idea of victim families gathering together to fight the insidious evil of food borne illness. We didn't necessarily know what to do, but something had to be done.

### The Birth of A Group

The next week, a popular local TV show, *Town Meeting*, decided to air a special on the topic. They brought in public health officials and a whistle blowing meat inspector, Steve Cockerham. There, more victim families met, and we decided it was time for action. During the show, Steve sadly pronounced it would happen again and again unless there were sweeping changes. After hearing Steve, we vowed to do all we could to bring about those needed changes.

After the show, I interviewed Steve Cockerham and public health officials. Steve provided more of the background on the necessary changes needed at the slaughterhouse and connected us to GAP (Government Accountability Project). With Steve's words ringing in our ears, we met later that week and formed The Foundation to Eliminate *E. Coli* Outbreaks.

### Taking Action

Using my gathered research, our small group drafted a letter to the President, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governor and our senators. Then, in the first week of February 1993, we met with our senators demanding reform...and a chance to speak. With images of children's mouths taped-closed fresh in our minds, speaking out was an imperative. We wanted to speak for those who could not speak for themselves.

As a result of this meeting, our then Senator, Slade Gorton, sent a strong letter on our behalf to Secretary of Agriculture demanding we be heard. We were ultimately given ten 10-minute slots at the USDA hearings. All the hearings were originally slated for cattle producing areas. Through letters and phone calls, we were able to get one hearing moved to Seattle. This testimony riveted national attention and prompted numerous TV investigative reports into our nation's slaughterhouses.

During one of our Public Information Forums, Mike and Diana Nole (whose son died) joined the group and took on leadership roles. Mike became our Foundation's president and Diana Nole personally staffed and paid for the victims' 800 number. She connected with victims all across the country in a way that only someone with her depth of grief could. Having buried her only son, Diana understood what people were experiencing. Her phone bills were often \$500 a month.

In the months following the outbreak, things moved fast. Soon, Steve Cockerham, Mary Heersink and a host of others would join us. Our small but growing group appeared in hundreds of TV, radio and print interviews. We attended countless meetings and I continued to gather more research and correspond with the USDA on needed changes. We networked with the public health community and met with victims.

In our first few months, we:

- Organized and formed the Foundation to Eliminate *E. Coli* Outbreaks. (By February 1993, the Foundation was already in the news.)
- Met with Senators.
- Corresponded with the Secretary of Agriculture, the USDA and the President.
- Funded and operated an 800 phone number for victim information and support.
- Connected with victims all across the country.
- Organized and hosted a public forum.
- Researched and collected volumes of facts.
- Developed informational literature.
- Had USDA hearings moved to Seattle so victims could speak.
- Arranged for Mary and Damion Heersink to speak at hearings and a public forum in Seattle.
- Testified before the USDA. (10 members of this group testified at hearings).
- Organized a nationwide meeting (in Kansas City) to bring victim families together.
- Planned a Congressional symposium.
- Opened dialogue with meat inspectors.
- Appeared on TV, in print media and on radio.

In June of 1993, Foundation members flew to Kansas City to take our group national. Through our research, we had located and connected with other victims and groups. We invited them to join us. In Kansas City, the Foundation's name was changed to S.T.O.P. and we planned the first Congressional Symposium.

On Tuesday, September 21, 1993, for the first time in our nation's history, foodborne illness victims flew in from around this nation and addressed Congress. Their voices were heard. And in a stroke of miraculous justice, one of the main speakers that day was that 9-year-old child, now on the long road to recovery. S.T.O.P. was now, as Meat and Poultry Magazine proclaimed, "a force to be reckoned with."

## S.T.O.P. SAFE TABLES OUR PRIORITY

P.O. Box 4352, Burlington, Vermont 05406

Phone: (802)863-0555 / Fax: (802)863-3733 / Victim Hotline: 1-800-350-STOP

E-Mail: [mail@safetables.org](mailto:mail@safetables.org) / [www.SafeTables.org](http://www.SafeTables.org)

Board of Directors: Nancy Donley, President, Elaine Dodge, VP/Chair, Robert Turnau, Treasurer, Laura Day, Secretary, Richard Dimock, Barbara Kowalczyk, Julie Marler, Donna Rosenbaum, Michael Scarpone

Staff: Karen Taylor Mitchell, Executive Director, Susan Grooters, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Marcia Mason, Administrative Assistant, Phoebe Flemming, Research Assistant



<continued from opposite side>

It is also a good idea to get a physical checkup. Grief and stress can have physical manifestations, and oftentimes caregivers and family members may have neglected their own health during a crisis.

### Social Outcomes

**Relationships** – Couples and families that endure a trauma like severe foodborne disease together frequently face challenges because individuals process trauma at very different rates and in very different ways. It can be especially difficult for family members to endure mood swings or response mechanisms that differ from their own, even though such diversity is to be expected. Difficulties may be exacerbated if parties in the relationship are suffering depression or other lasting medical consequences. Again, communication becomes of key importance, even though maintaining open lines may be very difficult. In addition, counseling may be of help. Many insurance policies offer flexible counseling funds that can be used for this purpose.

**Cooking and Eating** – It is very common for families and community members to face enormous stress around eating, food preparation, and/or social dining settings in the aftermath of foodborne disease. Education on avoiding risks and safe food handling is your best avenue toward peace of mind. Educating your friends and community can help extend your circle of comfort beyond your own kitchen. S.T.O.P. has educational materials available upon request.

### Financial Outcomes

Foodborne disease can impose a heavy financial burden, especially when medical costs are compounded by expenses for medical transport & equipment, physical therapy, funeral costs, counseling, or other items not covered by insurance. Because tracing the source of an illness is complicated, reimbursement rarely becomes available through legal claims against tainted food producers. Other potential sources of assistance include:

- Local churches, which may have or know of community emergency funds for which you qualify.
- Organizations like the First Hand Foundation that provide grants to individuals to help cover medical costs. Find a list of these in *Foundation Grants to Individuals* at your library.
- Your city councilperson or state senator or congressperson's office may also have a constituent service person who can help find resources for you. It is always a good idea to call.

### Finding Help

Resources exist that can help you deal with the various aspects of foodborne disease. These include lawyers, grief

counselors, medical specialists, nutritionists, support groups, foundations, even camps for bereaved children. But they may take a bit of investigation to find. Here are some places to start:

- **School counselors** and mental health counselors can be of great help in dealing with the emotional burdens of severe foodborne disease, whether the health crisis is ongoing or has passed. This can be an important part of taking care of yourself, especially when you are taking care of other members of your family.
- **County or community mental health centers** may offer low-cost counseling for those without insurance. Hospice and Compassionate Friends are two national groups that offer illness and grief support groups. Check the phone book or web for resources in your area, or call S.T.O.P. for a referral.
- Contact a **local church, synagogue, or mosque**. Even if you are not a parish member, they will likely be able to refer you to emotional and financial resources in your area.
- **Public health officials**. Your local public health department may or may not be helpful to you in tracing back the source of your illness, but they are the place to start. Even if your physician already contacted them, you may want to also foster a relationship so that you can learn more about disease tracking in your area. Remember, though, that most public health departments are more attuned to analysis than to victims. Don't hesitate to look beyond, or to pressure them for help.
- **An attorney** may be able to accelerate the public health response, secure financial assistance for you, and/or procure a reform of wrongful company policies. Although a legal case can be a long and exhausting process, it may be particularly worth pursuing for two reasons: to ensure adequate monetary resources to cover a victim's medical care, and/or to drive change in food production and handling practices which will prevent other people from getting sick. Most experienced personal injury attorneys are willing to do initial consultations at no charge.

### Getting Active

For some people, healing includes helping to stop the injustice of preventable foodborne disease. S.T.O.P. is here to help victims and concerned individuals learn about and become active in the fight against foodborne disease. By telling our stories to the media, policymakers, and community members, we strive to prevent further suffering, illness and death from foodborne disease. If you would like to become active in the fight against foodborne disease, call 1-800-350-STOP.

*This fact sheet was produced in honor of Morgan Dockter (1998-2002) with content and input provided by Julie Marler MSW, Laurie Girard MBA, Molly Tomony M.A., and Elaine Ramos MSW at S.T.O.P.'s 2003 conference. Safe Tables Our Priority (S.T.O.P.) is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit working to reduce suffering, illness and death due to food contaminated by pathogens. This fact sheet is produced for redistribution in its entirety. To excerpt a part or reprint in a publication, contact S.T.O.P. at PO Box 4352, Burlington, VT 05406; (802) 863-0555; or e-mail to mail@safetables.org.*



## Looking Back: The Birth of S.T.O.P.

By Kathi S. Allen

*This issue brings the first of several recollections by S.T.O.P. founders, presented in recognition of S.T.O.P.'s tenth anniversary and as inspiration to all who continue to strive to make a difference.*

In January of 1993, the Jack-in-the-Box Outbreak erupted in Seattle with a vengeance. Before it was over, more than 600 people in Washington

State would be affected and four people would die. When the final count on that horrific outbreak was fully understood, the tolls would be much higher and spread much farther. Infections, victims and death would cover five more states. But in Seattle, in January 1993, those living inside the storm only knew what was in front of our eyes.

### Our Children: The Silent Motivation

One of the victims, a then 9-year-old elementary school student, lay in a coma in Children's Hospital. She had already suffered a stroke and kidney failure. To see her, this once active child, was an experience you'd never forget. Her skin was discolored and necrosis was creeping in. Her chest was ripped open from sternum to pubic area and could not be closed due to severe intestinal infections and numerous drains. Thirteen life support tubes wound their way over her lifeless body and connected to whirring machines just above her head. Her mouth was taped shut around breathing tubes that kept her body alive. A drooping sign above her head read, "Expect a Miracle." And she was only one, of many.

In January, I made a trip to Children's Hospital ICU, bringing food to this child's mom, who was living there with many other traumatized families. It was a journey that changed my life. When I entered the ICU waiting room, the scene was beyond comprehension. Families huddled on plastic mats on the floor. Everywhere you looked you saw the same expression—haunting, frightened faces as family members clung to each other and waited for word on their critically ill children. At times, there were as many as 60 people huddled on the floor or in the few coveted chairs. It looked like a war zone—and it was.

I watched as a woman collapsed when the doctor gathered with her family and said, "I'm sorry, we have to take your son's colon out." Their son was two. Days later, they would be burying him. I heard the audible gasps as the helicopter whipped the air overhead. They all knew what it meant, and I would learn, another victim was arriving. I tried to look away as families cried into pay phones mounted on walls at each

*Continued on page 7*

## First S.T.O.P. Advocates & Victims' Conference Empowers, Educates

S.T.O.P.'s first-ever advocacy training conference, held in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of its founding, was a resounding success. Victims, public health officials, policy advocates, and concerned individuals gathered for three days at the stately Bishop O'Connor conference center in Madison, Wisconsin, where members of the Dane County K.E.V.I.N. chapter of S.T.O.P. and a

wealth of expert speakers provided a powerful and insightful event for attendees.



### A View from the Front

Among the key points presented by speakers during the conference:

- What is commonly referred to as "food safety" really encompasses three separate components: keeping contamination out of food; minimizing health risks from contaminated food, and responding to incidences of disease
- The routine shifting of the safety burden from food producers to consumers continues to grow.
- Failures in diagnosis and public health response are stalling food safety achievements, and better detection, treatment and response would lead to production of safer food.
- The promising PR/HACCP system being used by the USDA to control pathogens in meat is failing to achieve the pathogen reductions it should because of poor implementation, lax oversight, and constant judicial challenges from industry.
- Since USDA's primary goal is promoting U.S. meat, an inherent conflict exists between the health mission of the Food Safety and Inspection Service and its parent agency USDA – so that from FSIS'

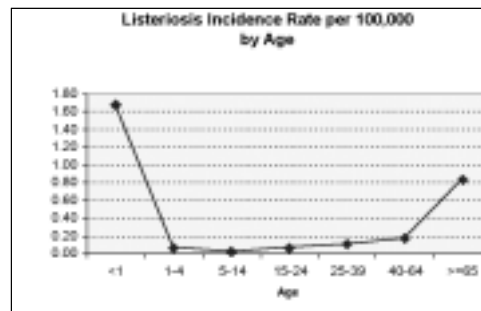
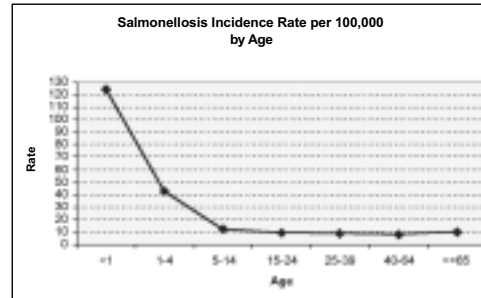


*Continued on page 4*



## CDC Graphs: Children Suffer Most Illnesses

continued from page 1



## S.T.O.P. Action Alert

S.T.O.P.'s **Not One More!** Campaign, launched to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the 1993 West Coast outbreak, is off to a tremendous start. Volunteers in 45 states made calls this spring, inspiring lawmakers to greater action and commitment to safer food. Great work - but we're nowhere near done!

What You Can Do: Call your legislators and ask them to get on board by joining the Food Safety Caucus and notifying S.T.O.P. of their intention to become food safety leaders!

## S.T.O.P. Recognizes Founders, Key Advocates

continued from page 1

Advocate Award" to Barbara and Michael Kowalcyk. Like so many S.T.O.P. members before them, the Kowalcyks have turned their personal tragedy into a torrent of activity to protect the lives and health of American families. In little more than a year, this couple's impact on S.T.O.P. and the quest for safer food can only be described as profound.

The awards are S.T.O.P.'s way of recognizing the generosity of those who have achieved milestones in stopping others from suffering the pain of foodborne disease, explained event emcee Karen Taylor Mitchell, S.T.O.P.'s Executive Director. "In a single decade, the people we recognize here have achieved a world where families have far less to fear at the dinner table. Overcoming tremendous personal challenges, this group has moved mountains, and we honor them not just for their achievements, but for providing the strong footing on which future food safety progress will stand."

## Advocacy Conference Provides Valuable Tools

continued from page 3

- inception, product safety has routinely taken a back seat to marketing.
- Lawsuits can be a very valuable means of stimulating food safety discussion, yet are unreliable in producing large-scale reform for the simple reason that as little as 2% of foodborne diseases are ultimately tracked to their source.
- A S.T.O.P. preliminary study on foodborne illness patients' experiences with the U.S. public health system found that 75% of foodborne illness victims who had contact with the public health departments reported negative experiences, and fewer than one in nine victims had been counseled about preventing the spread of infection to other persons.
- Strategies industries use to steer policy and public awareness away from productive change include stacking advisory committees with hired-gun experts and coopting a movement's key spokespeople to divide and polarize an issue.
- Past media coverage of foodborne disease reveals that industry strategies have largely diverted public discussion of foodborne disease to focus around new technologies and consumer responsibility rather than on public health impacts and the need for producer reforms.

Attendees at the conference were given valuable tools to create change:

- Media specialists Ross Anderson and Pete Smudde provided helpful pointers on how victims and others can present their stories to the media, while protecting themselves.
- John Calderone and the K.E.V.I.N. chapter of S.T.O.P. provided easy how-to tools for chapter-starting based on the experience gained in forming S.T.O.P.'s most active new chapter, advising "Creating a local chapter...has to be done as part of having a vision of how your community can be an even better place to live."
- Lois Banks of Trust for America's Health (TFAH) provided tremendous inspiration by speaking and singing about the power that individuals and communities have to bring about substantive change.
- S.T.O.P. Board Member Michael Scarpone reminded listeners that not everyone who hears about S.T.O.P.'s work will agree, but that if we share our passion and commitment, many people will, and that together we can accomplish our vision of a world where food is as safe as it should be.

These tools and more are available on the web. S.T.O.P. is seeking funding to make the full conference proceedings available by video and on the web. If you can help, please call Karen at S.T.O.P. headquarters!



S.T.O.P. Reproducible Food Safety Fact Sheet ►►► **Copy And Pass It On!**

## Dealing With the Aftermath of Devastating Foodborne Disease

*"Dealing with a foodborne illness in a family member can be a life altering experience. It takes time and self-patience to sort it through. Connecting with people in S.T.O.P. helped me feel like I was not alone with all of this. They understood where I was coming from, and gave me information to help me see where I am going..."*

—Elaine Ramos, Clinical Social Worker and Mother of E.coli/HUS Survivor

**S**.T.O.P. provides a wealth of information and resources for foodborne illness victims and those who struggle to help them. Sadly, the broad and lasting impacts of severe foodborne disease remain invisible to many Americans unless it becomes a part of their experience. The following outline was prepared for victims, their family members, and others who need to know more about what victims may go through, based on presentations and discussions at S.T.O.P.'s July 2003 conference. For more in-depth material or in-person assistance, please contact S.T.O.P. at 1-800-350-STOP.

### Physical Outcomes

Foodborne infectious diseases can have a broad range of physical sequelae, including high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney damage, neurological damage, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, reactive arthritis, reproductive challenges, and more. Accurately identifying long-term consequences and then treating them can pose ongoing challenges.

- Advocate for yourself.** Not all doctors are well-versed in foodborne disease, and medical knowledge on the subject evolves quickly. Similarly, not all school systems are prepared to deal with children with physiological or neurological damage resulting from strokes or severe illness. Commit yourself to becoming an expert on your particular needs and then reach out to find the professionals who can and will help you.
- Recruit other advocates.** Identify those friends, family members, religious leaders, teachers and members of the media who can help you. In addition, contact organizations like S.T.O.P., the National Kidney Foundation, the Guillain-Barre Syndrome Foundation, the Reiter's Information and Support Group, or others that can provide resources specific to your situation.
- Talk to other victims.** On occasion, victims can

disseminate important diagnostic and treatment information faster than medical professionals. Contact S.T.O.P. or check out our new on-line bulletin board at [www.safetables.org](http://www.safetables.org).

### Emotional Outcomes

**Grief, Anger, and Betrayal** are all feelings common among victims of foodborne disease. You may need to grieve for your loss of health, trust, future, routine, financial security, social support, identity and/or hope, and it is not unusual to meet these changes with anger and a sense of betrayal, which may be directed at the actual cause or other targets. Emotional, behavioral, and physical norms, as well as thought patterns, can all be disrupted as individuals pass through the stages of grief. It is important to recognize and be gentle with yourself as you undergo disruptions that may be beyond your control.

**Depression** is a frequent outcome among severe foodborne disease victims and their families. **Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome**, characterized by a reliving of the traumatic event in a variety of ways, also sometimes occurs, particularly among family members of those who have suffered from hemolytic uremic syndrome. Severe foodborne illnesses may also provoke panic attacks, agoraphobia and substance abuse in victims and those close to them. These risks and potential minefields mean that professional counseling may be critically important for victims and those around them.

At the bare minimum, it is important to work through the inherent emotional burdens by communicating your experiences on a regular basis. Keeping a journal and talking with others who are sympathetic and open about what you are going through are likely to be essential tools during the healing process. Children and young adults can also benefit from counseling and activities such as art therapy that are specifically designed to help them process the trauma they have experienced. <over>

S.T.O.P. honors and thanks all of the talented presenters, too numerous to name here, who donated their time and wisdom to S.T.O.P.'s first Victims' and Advocates' Conference in July 2003. Thank you also to our generous underwriters and sponsors, including Marler Clark law offices and the Dane County/K.E.V.I.N. chapter of S.T.O.P., as well as our individual conference donors. Finally, thank you to all the participants – it was you, more than anything, who made this first-ever event so special and such a success.

**Help continue this important work! Donate to S.T.O.P. today.**