

Good Grief

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Volume 2
April-June 2006

A quarterly publication of Griefworks BC

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Griefworks BC Website Innovations

This spring, www.griefworksbc.com will add a unique, interactive section for 5-12 year old kids grieving the death of someone they love.

With parent/guardian's permission, kids register for a password giving them access to the free site. When they login, a variety of activities and experiences await them.

The child creates an avatar (persona, for the older crowd) by selecting skin and hair colour, gender, clothing, and name. Now they're ready to go to the Gathering Place, Candleria, Writing Room, Music Spot, or Weather Station. They can also choose to go on their grief journey.

On the journey, they will be surprised by, or have to find, up to 8 activities to help them express or learn about their grief. If their parent/guardian goes with them (we highly recommend that they do), the parent also experiences and learns.

In the Gathering Place, kids invite their friends and family to come and honour the person at a special time or an anniversary. They can also choose a time for the group to gather again.

When someone lights a candle in the Candleria, it will stay lit. It will also have the person's name and other decorations that the child chooses.

The butterfly/heart in our logo will go with the child as they walk around or it will act as a guide or helper.

As the child does activities on their journey, they will get something to take to the Weather Station. There, the token will be attached to their chosen weather type to make it subside or increase, as they wish.

There will be places for the child to ask email questions. One spot is in a meadow where the child will make a picture of their person's funeral. Another spot may be about things that happen at school. Doing all of these tasks needs more than one visit to the site.

There are many other ideas we will be able to add over time, hopefully, including a way to have a group on-line.

Look for more information via email on this exciting resource for grieving kids.

Learn more at the BCHPCA conference in May, including a way to preview this great resource.

*BC Hospice
Palliative Care
Pre-Conference Day
May 25/06*

Bold Steps: Achieving Our Best in Bereavement Care

Can you imagine? We're getting our own bereavement-focused day at the annual BC Hospice Palliative Care Conference.



Jessica Easton, PhD, & Toby Snelgove, PhD, do workshops on trauma, CISD, team building, conflict resolution & more to organizations, police, First Nations, military, the United Nations, school districts, etc.

Jessica frequently appears on local, national & international radio & TV. Toby has produced both written & video materials.

In the morning, they'll teach us about trauma-informed bereavement support. In the afternoon, we'll figure out how we want our bereavement network to work.

Registration for this day is \$75 & includes lunch & 2 breaks. Go to www.hospicebc.org for on-line registration & information.

Griefworks BC

A partnership between Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia and Canuck Place Children's Hospice

Griefworks BC exists in partnership with Children's & Women's Hospital of BC & Canuck Place Children's Hospice to ensure that people in BC have access to bereavement support when & where they need it. Call 604-875-2741 or email kjohnson@cw.bc.ca to reach Kay Johnson, the Director.



To receive this newsletter regularly, send us your email or mailing address.

Email person@griefworksbc.com for permission to use copyrighted articles. This newsletter is published at Children's & Women's Hospital of BC.

Visit www.soul2soul.ca for support of teen grief. This site is part of the Bereaved Families of Ontario bereavement program.



Question Corner

From Marie: My 7 year-old son's friend just died. Should I take him to the funeral? He wants to go but I'm worried that he's too young.

Answer: (This answer is an except from 'Kids Grief: A Resource Guide' - Griefworks BC resource.) Whether a child attends the funeral, memorial or wake is different for each child. There is no right answer to this question. Ask and then listen to what the child wants to do. Often fear of the unknown is what prevents them from attending. (continued on pg. 3)

To have your question answered or to submit ideas for future articles, information, etc., please email person@griefworksbc.com or call 604-875-2741. Toll free to 1-877-234-3322 outside the Lower Mainland.



GRIEF



I didn't know a heart could die, before it stopped beating.
I didn't know a life could cease, before it stopped breathing.

I didn't know how devastation could wend a living soul
I didn't know how death could make us lose all self control.

I didn't know the pain of loss was so intense and sharp.
I didn't know the depth of void, death leaves within the heart.

I didn't know how often tears would redden hurting eyes.
I didn't know how hard it was to say one's last good-byes.

I didn't know that pain would come and go as it well pleased.
I didn't know that joy is scarce to those who are bereaved.

I didn't know that time would stop, and meaning cease to be.
I didn't know that friends would pray, but shy away from me.

I didn't know how difficult to get the whole night through.
I didn't know the strength it took for simple tasks to do.

I didn't know that as time pass, slowly, the pain subsides.
I didn't know what I thought was lost, still in my heart resides.

Now I know a little spark, somehow in me remained.
Now I know that someday, my life will be sustained.

Now I know the feelings felt, was all a part of grief.
Now I know how fervent prayer helped me to find relief.

So rest assured my unknown friends, though healing comes real slow.
It actually does get better, for now, I truly know.

For I've survived my baby's death, that occurred this time last year.
I still feel the loss and always will, but the pain's much less severe.

Sandra L. Washington D.D.

<http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewpoetry.asp?AuthorID=26966&id=136062>

In Memorium

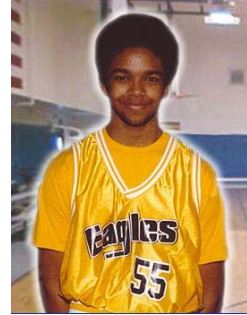
Recent Honour Page Offerings



Angelica Lynn Hatchell



Rebecca Faith Barnes



Christopher Charles Miller



To add your tribute to the Honour Page, click on Post A Memorial above or go to www.griefworksbc.com



Question Corner, cont'd

Involve the child in planning the funeral, memorial or wake, if it is appropriate. Ask them to suggest music the person liked or to choose a belonging or poem to place in the coffin. As the child helps, they learn about what will happen which helps them to make a choice about attending. Once they know what will happen, even though it will be hard, they may feel more comfortable attending.

Be as specific as possible when you describe what will happen. Describe how the room will look; what and who will be there; and what is expected of them. Tell them that adults and other children may cry or look sad and people usually talk very quietly at funerals and memorials.

People attend funerals and memorials to publicly share their grief. Like adults, kids need a way to focus on the

grief, allowing the expression of feelings. It is usually more comforting to share the grief than to experience it alone.

If the child attends the funeral of someone they love, have a trusted adult other than a parent ready to escort the child outside, if necessary. Having someone else do this allows parents to stay and participate for their own grieving.

If you alone decide that the child will not attend, you may add to their fear. They may think that something secretive is happening. They will also miss actually seeing that the death has occurred which may slow their healing.

If the funeral is far away but your child wants to say goodbye or feels upset about not being able to go, you can encourage them to send something meaningful, like a poem or a story about the person to be shared at the service.

On-line suppliers

If you're looking for something new for the bereavement kits you use with families after a death or for ritual events or memorials, these site may have what you're looking for.

On these sites, you can find unique stones, decorations, and other items. If you know of other sources, send them along and we'll put them in a later edition.

www.shipwreckbeads.com has thousands of beads, chains, hearts, etc. in crystal, wood, metal, and other media.

www.griefstore.com - books, videos, tapes, gift iitems, & cards.

http://healing.about.com/cs/angel1/tp/aatp_angelgifts.htm lots of categories of items such as inspirational, healing, angels, dolphins, and so on.

Contributor's Column

Re-Organizing After A Life Changing Event

by Judy Brown

Judy is a hospice volunteer, writer, professional organizer & retired Justice of the Peace. www.organizedforever.com

As much as we hope for a carefree life, there will be events that change your life forever. Nothing stays the same, change is inevitable; & these unexpected & unpleasant changes require you to re-organize your whole way of life. It might be just a move to another town or country, or it might be a divorce, death of a spouse or child. How can we cope with this change & organize a new life?

The first thing to remember is that everything doesn't have to be done in one day. You may be overwhelmed by grief, anger, confusion or fear, and getting through the day is as much as you can do. This doesn't mean these feelings will last forever. You may need to wallow in them & take time out to rest, re-evaluate & re-group.

You may have to deal with death, divorce, moving, job-hunting & kids all at once. Each family member is also coming to terms with the loss & problems of restructuring life. Tempers & emotions run high.

Before anything, deal with the emotions. Call a meeting with your immediate family (the ones in this just like you) & acknowledge each person's feelings. Find out what the biggest fears are & see if you can talk about them. When each person has a turn talking & all the fears are listed, brainstorm a list for an action plan for each person.

What will make each fear go away? How can you help each other to make things better? Each person (even the smallest child) should have a to-do list of chores & tasks to be completed each day.

Often a big fear for a child is something you can reassure them about right away. With death of a spouse or divorce, children worry that something might happen to the remaining parent. Assure them that you're taking good care of yourself & hope to be around for a long time.

Editor's note: Watch for Part 2 of **Re-organizing After A Life-Changing Event** in the next edition of Good Grief.

Upcoming Events



Annual Conference Bold Steps: Becoming Our Best May 26-28

Sheraton Guildford Hotel Surrey, BC

Register on-line at
www.hospicebc.org

Early Bird deadline is April 28, 2006

Early Bird	\$350	Regular Rate	\$425
One-day	\$235	One-day	\$285

Discounts for students and volunteers.

Hike for Hospice

On Sunday, May 7, 2006, thousands across Canada will lace up their sneakers & hiking boots to support the Third Annual 'Hike for Hospice Palliative Care.'



To find a Hike for Hospice in
your community, go to:

www.chpca.net/events/.htm