



Brattleboro Area Hospice *Newsletter*

April 2010

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

MY HEART BROKE OPEN ART EXHIBIT

On the themes of death, loss and grief

Opening on Gallery Walk
April 2, 2010 5:30 – 8:30 pm
at *The Blue Moose*, 29 High Street, Brattleboro

Sponsored by Brattleboro Area Hospice & Blue Moose
On view through the month of April

There is a healing power in revealing your experience, in being heard and witnessed. Equally in each of us there is a primeval need to be taken outside of our own skin and look through the eyes of another. This art exhibition is an opportunity for our community to share and witness expressions of grief and loss through visual art.



Impermanence by Lauri Richardson



I shall be coming back to you
From seas, rivers, sunny meadows,
glens that hold secrets:
I shall come back with my hands full
Of light and flowers...
I shall bring back things I have picked up,
Traveling this road or the other,
Things found by the sea or in the pinewood.
There will be a pine cone in my pocket,
Grains of pink sand between my fingers.
I shall tell you of a golden pheasant's
feather...
Will you know me?

Hilda Conkling, at age 10 years

FROM MELISSA, BEREAVEMENT VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Since the announcement of my leaving appeared in the March newsletter, many of you have been asking me what I'll be doing, so I thought I'd take some time to begin to answer that here.

I've been making a list of things I hope to do during what I'm calling my Senior Gap Year. I didn't coin that term myself—I found it online when I was searching for Swami Beyondananda's funny little schtick on "pretirement". (Maybe you remember it? Something about quitting before you get too tired to do the things you've dreamed of.) I never found Beyondananda's piece, but what I did find is that both "Senior Gap Year" and "Pretirement" have entered the lexicon as terms that describe this current phenomenon among people of a certain age. This is the time when one leaves what one has been doing to earn a living but is not ready to start living the life of a retiree. In a senior gap year, one takes time out to shift gears and explore previously unexplored interests. For some, it results in a second career. Whatever occurs during this period is a step out of the ordinary, an opening to possibilities.

I don't where my gap year will take me or how many things on my list I will actually realize. But

one promise I have made is to take myself out of the country to stay a few months someplace where I can acquire an ease with the language spoken there, be it French in Senegal or Mali, or Spanish in Peru or Argentina. I have a pretty good start in each language, but I want to get to the point where I can speak without composing and rehearsing; to understand what I hear without parsing and "grammarizing" and translating; to respond and interact spontaneously if imperfectly. I want to experience living in another language. Most people assume that I will decide where to go based on what sights I want to see, activities I want to engage in, food I want to eat, or music I want to hear. Certainly, I will want to steep myself in whatever culture I land in, absorbing the sensations, aromas, tastes and sounds. I will look for ways to volunteer and contribute to the community. But mostly? I just wanna talk!

Stay tuned. In the next newsletter I'll tell about what I'll be doing in my remaining time here.

Bereavement Volunteer Dinner-and-a-Movie Night

Thursday, April 29 5:30–8:30 pm

Bring a brown bag dinner; Drinks (and popcorn) provided

Here's an opportunity for Bereavement Volunteers (and others who may have an interest in bereavement issues) to come together in a setting that may be more social than other in-services or trainings.

We'll eat and mingle before settling down to watch *Lars and the Real Girl*, a movie with a bereavement theme starring Emily Mortimer, Ryan Gosling, and Patricia Clarkson. This is a warm and quirky tale of a troubled young man coming to terms with his losses. His grief process is unconventional, as is the "bereavement support" his community has to offer him.

There will be time afterwards to share reactions and observations on the grieving process as it was portrayed in the film. Please let me know if you're coming so I'll know how much popcorn to pop! (Melissa x108)

MOTHERLAND

Directed by Jennifer Steinman

Now available in DVD at both the Hospice and Brooks Memorial Library

A Film Review by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat
From the website: www.spiritualityandpractice.com

“The pain of grief is just as much a part of life as the joy of love; it is, perhaps, the price we pay for love; it is the cost of commitment,” Colin Parkes and Robert Weiss write in *Recovery from Bereavement*. There are few tragedies more harrowing or debilitating than the death of a child. Each year more than eight million families around the world experience this nightmare. Grieving demands a special kind of courage and cannot be rushed. Parents must find a new source of hope for the future without slighting the treasured memory of the child who has died.

This difficult process is explored in *Motherland*, a deeply affecting award-winning documentary directed by Jennifer Steinman. This could be called “a healing adventure” for that is exactly what happens as six American mothers travel 8,000 miles to South Africa on a 17-day journey to live with local families and work with African organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children. *Motherland* was the winner of this year’s Emerging Visions award at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival and Best Documentary at the 2009 California Independent Film Festival.

Edgar Jackson has observed that “mourning is the process by which the powerful emotion of grief is slowly and painfully brought under control.” The six mothers in this documentary share in common the excruciating sense of loss which leaves them feeling empty, depressed, and sad.

Debbi, a paramedic, just can’t get over the death of her son who was killed by a drunk driver. Mary Helena has been immobilized by a stroke following the murder of her son. Anne’s 15-year-old daughter committed suicide after a long bout with depression. Kelly’s son died in a motorcycle accident. Barbara’s son was killed in a head-on collision, and she is heading for a divorce. Lauren is mourning the death of her brother and decides to make this journey when her own mother can’t go.

As these women work together at a day care center, a place focusing on physically-challenged youth, and elsewhere; they open up to each other and, in the process, begin to deepen the healing that accompanies serving others. In her narration, the director comments on the learning that takes place when the American mothers see how naturally South African women who are mourning for the deaths of children band together in solidarity and do not suffer alone. In his novel *The Natural*, Bernard Malamud states: “We have two lives; the life we learn with and the life we live after that.” *Motherland* shows how the lives of these mothers are transformed by their healing adventure of service. By nurturing others, they experience new birth. It also shows us that mourning cannot be hurried; the heart has its own timetable for letting go and starting over.

April In-service: Boundaries and the Volunteer’s Role

Wednesday April 7, 2010, 5:00 – 6:30 PM

BAH Upstairs Meeting Room

Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you were witness to someone going over a boundary limit and wondering how to help rein it all back in? Or perhaps you have wondered if what you want to say or offer to a client or their family is appropriate. Our role in helping families to maintain healthy boundaries is a rich area for discussion and discovery. We hope that you will join us. To RSVP please call the office at 257-0775.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND EXPERIENCED GOODS

by Sarah Rice, Shop Volunteer Coordinator

As the volunteer coordinator of Experienced Goods Thrift Shop, I see people from all walks of life come into the store. They come not only to shop, but also to contribute to the organization by volunteering. In past articles I've talked more about mainstream volunteers who we get through their experiences with the shop. Now I want to talk about other volunteers that we get and why it's important that we continue to accept and serve the programs they come to us through. Specifically I want to talk about "Restorative Justice" and why it's important to be part of our community's role in this process.

The definition of restorative justice is to mend damages caused both to communities and the people affected by a crime. Restorative justice is not a new concept. In fact, it has been used in many different cultures as an alternative to punishment, while still holding the offenders responsible for their mistakes. Programs that utilize restorative justice help to expand horizons for both the community they work in and their clients. These programs prove that people and communities can change for the better. Part of what restorative justice does is to create a stronger sense of community between organizations and individuals in the community. It's about reintegrating the offender into the community. A large part of that reintegration is community service with local non-profit agencies. Whether juveniles or adults, you can reasonably expect community service to be a positive influence on the offenders.

Being a non-profit, we rely on our community to provide volunteers to help us run our organization. Some of these volunteers come to us out of the pure goodness of their hearts. Those are true humanitarians who see the importance of being part of their community without influence. Some of our volunteers come to us when out of work to keep themselves in a work environment and stay busy while searching elsewhere for paid employment. Others of these volunteers come to us through school based requirements, whether through college or high school. Many schools see the importance of giving back to the community and encourage their students to be part of this process. A number of our volunteers have come to us through probation, diversion, or preventative programs to fulfill their reparative requirements. And there are yet others who come to

us through other state and community run programs that may include welfare programs, addiction fighting programs, work education programs, troubled youth programs, and other reparative/preventative based programs that are too numerous to mention.

It is important to be an agency that participates in accepting volunteers from these programs. In doing so we are given an opportunity to have a direct positive influence in the integration of the person back into the community. By accepting restorative justice volunteers we are encouraging the reparation of the harm the offender committed and restoring hope into the community for the recovering criminal. Our role as a non-profit that accepts these volunteers is simply to help repair the community and also to support the offender in regaining respect for the community and from the community.

Our purpose and goal here at the shop is to provide fundraising for Brattleboro Area Hospice. We reach out to the community to help in what we do, whether in donating funds, goods or time. These things are all important to help keep our organization running. Because we get help from our community we have the opportunity to also give back to the community. BAH does that directly with the free services of Hospice Care that they provide. Here at the shop, we can help indirectly by building community, outreach to others in need, and through educating of our volunteers and shoppers about what Hospice does. They will, in turn, educate their friends and family about our mission.

Several of the volunteers we've taken in here at the shop through restorative justice have expressed to us the importance of our role to them in their recovery. We're able to provide structure in a very supportive environment.. The staff and regular volunteers here have strong connections with each other in sharing our passion to support an organization as important as Hospice. This camaraderie has a very positive influence on our surrounding environment and, as a result, many of the restorative justice volunteers continue to volunteer with us even after fulfilling their restorative justice requirements.

While writing this article I was reading about the subject online nine websites. I may have been directly influenced in my writing by these sites and articles, and they credit for much of my information. Due to space limitations I cannot list the websites here, however please feel free to contact me for this list.

The House Dog's Grave

by Robinson Jeffers

I've changed my ways a little; I cannot now
Run with you in the evenings along the shore,
Except in a kind of dream; and you,
If you dream a moment,
You see me there.

So leave awhile the paw-marks on the front door
Where I used to scratch to go out or in,
And you'd soon open; leave on the kitchen floor
The marks of my drinking-pan.

I cannot lie by your fire as I used to do
On the warm stone,
Nor at the foot of your bed; no,
All the nights through I lie alone.

But your kind thought has laid me less than six feet
Outside your window where firelight so often plays,
And where you sit to read,
And I fear often grieving for me,
Every night your lamplight lies on my place.

You, man and woman, live so long, it is hard
To think of you ever dying.
A little dog would get tired, living so long.
I hope that when you are lying
Under the ground like me your lives will appear
As good and joyful as mine.

No, dears, that's too much hope:
You are not so well cared for as I have been.
And never have known the passionate undivided
Fidelities that I knew.
Your minds are perhaps too active, too many-sided...
But to me you were true.

You were never masters, but friends. I was your friend.
I loved you well, and was loved. Deep love endures
To the end and far past the end. If this is my end,
I am not lonely. I am not afraid. I am still yours.



Brattleboro Area Hospice

Board of Directors

Karen Abel
Connie Baxter
Judy Carpenter
Penfield Chester, *Co-President*
Victoria Collins, *Secretary*
Tim Gerdes, *Treasurer*
Kris McDermet, *Co-President*
Greg Moschetti
Patti Pusey
Mike Welch

Hospice Office

Bettina Berg, *Hospice Volunteer
& Education Coordinator*
Melissa Hays, *Bereavement
Volunteer Coordinator*
Shirley Kasanoff, *Office Manager*
Ryan Murphy, *Hospice Care
Coordinator*
Susan Parris, *Executive Director*
Elizabeth Evans Pittman
Bereavement Care Coordinator
Muriel Wolf, *Hospice Care
Coordinator*

Experienced Goods

Thrift Shop

Gemma Champoli, *Store Manager*
Sarah Rice
Shop Volunteer Coordinator
Hannah Curtin
Ellen Graham
Assistant Store Managers
Christopher John
Jen Reichman
Brandi Lyn Younger
Store Assistants

Experienced Goods

Home Furnishings

Karen Zamojski, *Store Manager*
Karen Abel
Emily Freeman
Tom Harris
Store Assistants

Calendar

April 2, Friday, 5:30–8:30 pm. Opening: My Heart Broke Open Art Show opening at Blue Moose, 29 High Street during April Gallery Walk. More info in this newsletter. Art remains on view through April.

April 5. Volunteer Report Forms due.

April 7, 14, and 28, Wednesdays, 4–5:15 pm. (Group is not meeting the 21st.) Good Grief Group for 8-10 year-olds. Call Elizabeth Ungerleider, facilitator, at 258-0763.

April 7, Wednesday, 5:00–6:30 pm. In-service: Boundaries and the Volunteer's Role. More info in this newsletter.

April 12 & 26, Monday, 6:30–8 pm. Bereaved Parents Support Group. This group meets the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Facilitated by Lynn Martin. Call Melissa or Elizabeth to register.

April 14 & 28, Wednesday, 4:30–6:00 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group meets the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards. Call Melissa or Elizabeth to register.

April 16, Friday, 6 pm. Write Action Members Read on the subject of Grief and Loss, Blue Moose, High Street, Brattleboro.

April 19, Monday, 5:30–7:30 pm. Board of Directors meeting, at the Hospice Office.

April 29, Thursday, 5:30–8:30 pm. Brownbag Dinner/ Movie Night. View and discuss a film dealing with bereavement issues. Call Melissa to register.

Living Life Now – a free Healing Discussion Group for anyone who has been diagnosed with cancer. Offered at Sojourns Health Clinic in Westminster. Ongoing through November, begins April 5, 5:30–7pm. Call Sojourns, 802-722-4023, for more information and to register. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.

Pet Loss Workshops – offered by BAH and Windham County Humane Society. Thursday, May 20, 5:30–7:30pm for veterinary and humane shelter staff. Saturday, 5/22, 10:00–12:00 noon for community members. Both workshops held at WCHS. Look for more information in the May newsletter. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.

All of our services are free because of you!

We rely on donations from the community to keep our services free of charge. Help support our work by sending a donation to: Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Thank you!

U.S. Postage Paid
Non-Profit Org.
BRATTLEBORO, VT
05301
PERMIT NO. 109

Brattleboro Area Hospice
191 Canal Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
Return Service Requested