Brattleboro Area Hospice Newsletter

November 2010

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

2009 Community Altar

COMMUNITY ALTAR

To Honor Our Loved Ones

at

Experienced Goods Home Furnishings

51 Elliot Street

The Altar opens on November 5th, 5:30 pm

Hallowell will sing at 6:30 pm

Dia de los Muertos is a holiday in many Latin countries to remember and honor those we love who have died. We encourage you to bring an item on the altar **(note: please bring xeroxed pictures and/or objects of no great concern as items can not be returned).** At 6:30 we will hear the healing songs of the Hallowell singers, who have just released their second CD, *Love Call Me Home*.

Call Brattleboro Area Hospice for more information: 257-0775.

PET LOSS: CARING FOR OUR PETS THROUGH THE END OF THEIR LIVES

Monday, November 8th, 7:00–9:00 pm
Presented by Dr. Ronald Svec, VT/NH Veterinary Clinic and Cheryl Richards, MA, CT, End of Life & Grief Counselor
Sponsored by Brattleboro Area Hospice
Location: Brew Barry Conference Center, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Research has shown that pets provide both physical and psychological health benefits to their caregivers and deep bonds are often formed between animal and human. However, anyone who has experienced the intimate connection that can occur with their companion animals must also face the sorrow that comes when it's time to say goodbye.

This evening is appropriate for people who love, live or work with animals and who are facing the upcoming death of their pet. This includes parents and teachers who want to support their children through a pet loss. Many times the death of an animal friend is a young person's first experience with mortality. How a child is or is not helped during this time can deeply impact their feelings about death as they grow older.

This session offers information and resources for:

- Supporting your pet as they near the end of their lives
- Knowing when and if euthanasia is appropriate
- Preparing and involving children in their pet's dying process
- Moving through the grief that accompanies learning to say goodbye

Register for this free session by calling 802-257-0775.

CELEBRATING DAY OF THE DEAD

By Ellen Graham, Experienced Goods Assistant Manager

Dia de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead, is the Mexican version of the worldwide tradition of honoring the dead with beauty, memory and love. It was originally celebrated by the indigenous peoples of Latin America, notably the Aztecs, who held a festival, presided over by Mictecacihuatl, the female ruler of the underworld, to honor the interconnectedness of life and death. The indigenous Andeans took time to visit with the physical remains of their loved ones in the third year after their burial. This tradition lives on today in a festival called Dia de los Natitas, or the Day of the Skulls. The skulls of the ancestors are kept in the home throughout the year, to watch over and protect the family. On November 9th, they are decorated with flowers, and offerings of food, alcohol and cigarettes are made. They may also be taken to church for a special blessing ceremony.

When the Europeans arrived in the Americas, they did their best to eradicate the local traditions and beliefs. However, under the guise of Catholicism, these beliefs continued to flower, and the celebration evolved. The Europeans celebrate the church holidays of All Saint's and All Soul's day, which include visits to the cemetery and preparing food for the dead family members. These traditions are also a part of the modern Dia de los Muertos celebration. In the Philippines, where Spanish colonial rule lasted for three hundred years, Aram Ng Mga Patay, (day of the dead in Tagalog) is celebrated. This festival mirrors the Mexican celebration with its celebratory, family reunion atmosphere.

On striking aspect of the celebration is how the idea of death itself is humanized. Sugar skulls are consumed, and artists create works that satirize life and death. One of the most famous images associated with the Day of the Dead is La Calavera Catrina, or The Elegant Skull. Created by the printmaker José Guadalupe Posada in 1913, it is the image of a glamorous skeleton, dressed as an upper class woman of the era. It serves as a reminder that no one, no matter how rich, lucky or beautiful, is immune to the reality of death. These images, commonly known as Catarinas, are also associated with the deity Mictecacihuatl, who is still at the party after all these years.

Traditions evolve and change, influenced by the dominant culture. However, like our departed loved ones, the old ways are always with us, in memory and in action. At this time of year, we honor the dead, but also the lives they lived. We celebrate the flow of life and death, and honor those who are gone, but still with us.

ALZHEIMER'S VOLUNTEERING: WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

Presented by Cheryl Richards

Wednesday November 17th, 6–7:30 PM at BAH

As we discovered while taking the hospice volunteer training, looking at our own fears and issues around disease and death can be helpful. In this session we will explore our own personal challenges with Alzheimer or dementia patients. As with all our in-services, this is a safe environment for you to explore what comes up for you around this complicated topic. By attending this inservice you are not committing yourself to volunteering with Alzheimer's patients; this session is offered to everyone regardless of their availability to work with these clients. If you have not signed up for this presentation/discussion and wish to attend, or if you have questions, please call the office at 257-0775 x 102 or x 105.

He hovered beside Jane's bed,
Solicitous: "What can I do?"
It must have been unbearable
while she suffered her private hurts
to see his worried face
looming above her, always anxious to do
something when there was
exactly nothing to do. Inside him,
some four-year-old
understood that if he was good—thoughtful,
considerate, beyond
reproach, perfect—she would not leave him.

~ Donald Hall

BECOMING A HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

By Natalie Donovan

I became a Hospice Care volunteer many years ago. After I completed the hospice classes, I was excited to have my first client. However, he passed away before I could begin to use the things I learned. At the time, the wife of my deceased client needed assistance with her husband's funeral and his memorial. You could say I started my second aspect of my hospice volunteering, bereavement, before I had any official training.

Noree, who was the Hospice Care Coordinator at the time, found another client for me. This time my client was at Eden Park nursing home. She was a sweet lady who had dementia or early Alzheimer's. She enjoyed word search puzzles and she loved people to visit her. I learned a lot from this little lady. People in nursing homes don't get many visitors. My visits lasted over a year. I went on vacation for a few days and when I went to visit her again she had passed away. I felt such a void.

Now on to the second chapter of my hospice voyage.

Melissa asked me to take the Bereavment classes. She said "you know you have been doing this work already." I agreed. After completing my classes, I received my first official bereavement client. Let me say this has been wonderful, because it is different from hospice care. My new client had lost his wife of many years. I have now been visiting him for 15 months. Through this process, I have listened, observed, laughed and helped him feel better about his life. It is especially important to do this because you can alert your coordinator about the clients' health.

When I became a volunteer, it was kind of a selfish thing. I was retired and needed something to do. Hospice has given me so much.

Hospice volunteering has taken me now full circle, because I am now back at the nursing home, which has a new name of Pine Heights. My new hospice care client has Alzheimer's. She is a lovely lady who is legally blind, doesn't speak much but loves visitors. During my latest visit there a little girl, 2 ½, was visiting someone. She went and blew my client a kiss. I told my client what had happened, and she blew a kiss to the little girl. Don't ever think that your visits to a nursing home are not needed. There is always a warm thank you for coming to visit.

In conclusion, I would say to anyone who may be thinking about becoming a hospice volunteer, do it. Try both Hospice Care and Bereavement. Both are different, but alike. You still will listen, observe, talk and learn so much about yourself and helping others.

CELEBRATE HOME FURNISHINGS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

by Sarah Rice, Shop Volunteer Coordinator

Experienced Goods Home Furnishings is one! Only one year ago, and it seems like yesterday, Experienced Goods Thrift Shop's younger, but more sophisticated, sister store opened her doors. For those of you that have not yet visited this beautiful shop, shame on you, you must! It is a delight for the eyes. The shop staff and volunteers painstakingly put together aesthetically pleasing displays that awe and amaze. This shop has offered thea community a new place to bring their quality donations that they may have otherwise not thought of donating. Whether you're a connoisseur, a collector, a gift giver, a dealer, or a lover of things, this shop is a great place to find affordable hand selected items that not only help to support Brattleboro Area Hospice, but also leave us to pant for more. I sat down with Karen Zamojski, the manager of Home Furnishings, and asked her to reflect on the year past.

Sarah*:* Name a great thing that happened in the last year with Experienced Goods Home Furnishings.

Karen: One of the positives that has happened is that Experienced Goods has been able to tap into a different community of people which also brought more awareness to Brattleboro Area Hospice as a whole. Personally, I've discovered that I have a creative side and been able to use it and put it to work for me. That's helped me get more self confidence that I felt had been lacking in some areas. I love being able to display the finer pieces donated to Experienced Goods and show their finer side. A lot of the items that get donated to the Home Furnishings store had a long life and it's great to be able to help those items continue to shine. At Elliot Street I feel that there is a consciousness to be green by recycling or reusing, and it's really happening. You see it when customers talk about how they plan on reinventing the purpose of items for other uses.

S: What is one of the most challenging things that happened in the past year?

K: An example of a challenge is that recently we received a donation of twelve pieces from a local potter. When they came in I knew we needed to get them out on the floor and display them in the best and quickest way possible. A wonderful donation like that needed to go out fast but also deserved the attention to be displayed in a respectful and beautiful way. Part of that challenge was being able to be flexible with introducing new inventory into the current display of the shop without harming any of the other aesthetics while allowing such an incredible donation to shine.

S: What is an unexpected joy that you have experienced from the Elliot Street Store that you might not have expected a year ago when you opened Experienced Goods Home Furnishings?

K: The daily compliments of the window displays and the way the shop is laid out. Literally on a daily basis we get compliments and comments from customers, donors and passer-bys about how visually pleasing the displays are. People have told us that they love coming down Elliot Street and stopping at our windows or coming in to enjoy the atmosphere. It allows them to momentarily leave the outside world and take a break from life. I've heard the phrase "eye-candy" a lot since we've opened our doors. I think nostalgia is a big piece of it. I'm always hearing people say "I remember when..." It's like mashed potatoes; people want that comfort sometimes when so much tradition is out the door these days.

S: What has been an unexpected obstacle since opening the doors to the Elliot Street store?

K: The economy that continues to look bleak. In the past we could rely on people shopping more spontaneously. Now we notice that we spend more time with people that want to purchase an item to help them decide if it is something that they can use more practically as opposed to just buying on a whim.

S: What has been the biggest change at the shop from opening to now?

K: The realization that our revenues will not only come from the fine furniture that we sell, but also the great art work, jewelry, and vintage clothing that we have on hand .

S: How do you feel the shop has grown in the past year?

K: We're growing with the types of products we are receiving for donations. Like the local pottery I spoke of before, and recently we had a beautiful loom go through the shop, and it's all because the word has spread that Experienced Goods now has a shop that can accept higher end items. That's

opened our doors to a new network of donors and customers.

S: How do you think the shop on Elliot Street has helped BAH grow?

K: I think it's given BAH more exposure. At Elliot Street we are afforded more time with each customer which in turn offers opportunity to educate what Hospice is. When you can give each customer that kind of one-on-one, it allows the customers to support BAH in a different way and allows us to explain to the community the different services that are offered by BAH. The Home Furnishings store is a place customers are acknowledged; it has a warm and inviting atmosphere. Hospice stems from the Latin word "hospe" which means "to host a guest or stranger." The word Hospice was originally used to describe a shelter open to weary and sick travelers. This reaffirms that we're here for community—it's about sharing moments in life with customers and donors.

S: What is the most enjoyable area for you to manage the store?

K: Being able to take the moments to talk to customers and interacting with the wonderful volunteers that put so much time and effort into helping. It doesn't feel like managing, it feels like being part of a welcome center. Both stores allow for having the interactions with customers that may include directing visitors to the town, getting involved with Gallery Walk, or simply talking about a specific piece that may have meaning to someone. It's nice to be an extension of Hospice, we don't deal directly with providing people with hospice care or bereavement care, but helping people through the shop daily or through life is humbling.

S: What is the most challenging area for you to manage the store?

K: It's challenging to delegate and let go and to allow myself to depend on other people to help. I had to learn to give up areas and allow the store to flow—flow the way it's going to flow. I've learned a great deal about being flexible and tolerant for the unexpected.

S: How would you sum up the past year at Experienced Goods Home Furnishing in a statement?

K: Quick! Fast-paced—we've had a remarkable amount of community support and donations. I have to give big props to all the Flat Street staff to not have secluded the Elliot Street store but to include us as a part of Experienced Goods as a whole. I have to thank my staff – they really have a passion – it really blows my mind how generous and supportive people involved in this organization can be – and that's just the tip of the iceberg. Elliot Street brings a different dimension to Hospice, and I hope it continues to be supported.

The Road

Here is the road: the light
comes and goes then returns again.
Be gentle with your fellow travelers
as they move through the world of stone and stars
whirling with you yet every one alone.
The road waits.
Do not ask questions but when it invites you
to dance at daybreak, say yes.
Each step is the journey; a single note the song.

~ Arlene Gay Levine ~

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Jayml Mistry
Jen Reichman
Brandi Lyn Younger *Store Assistants*
Experienced Goods Home Furnishings
Karen Zamojski, *Store Manager*
Karen Abel
Sharon Dunn
Tom Harris *Store Assistants*

Calendar

November 3 & 17, Wednesday, 5–6:30 pm. Suicide Loss Support Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month facilitated by Andrea Edwards. This group is co-sponsored by The Samaritans, Inc. Visit their website at <http://www.samaritansnh.org> Call Winnie or Elizabeth to register.

November 5, Friday, Volunteer Report Forms due.

November 5, Friday, Eighth Annual Celebration of Dia de los Muertos, Day of the Dead, on Gallery Walk Night at Experienced Goods Home Furnishings, 51 Elliot Street.

November 8, Monday, 7:00 pm–9:00 pm. Pet Loss: Caring for our pets through the end of their lives, with Dr. Ronald Svec and Cheryl Richards. More info in this newsletter.

November 8 & 22, 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 Winnie or Elizabeth to register.

November 10 & 24, Wednesday, 5:00–6:30 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month facilitated by Cheryl Richards. Call Winnie or Elizabeth to register.

November 15, Monday, 4–5 pm. The Good Grief Program for Children 8-10 years old meets monthly on the third Monday. Facilitated by Elizabeth Ungerleider.

November 15, Monday, 5:30–7:30 pm. Board of Directors meeting, at the Hospice Office.

November 17th, 6–7:30 pm. In-service: *Alzheimer's Volunteering: What's Stopping You?* presented by Cheryl Richards.

November 25 & 26, Thursday & Friday, Hospice Office closed for holiday.

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!

Brattleboro Area Hospice
191 Canal Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301

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