

March  
April  
2011

# Seasons

Brattleboro Area Hospice  
Bereavement Newsletter



## The Library Issue

Soon after the death of a loved one, it can be difficult to make decisions, to focus, to "take things in." Over time, though, in looking for ways to address ongoing questions and a need for support and understanding, some find reading useful. The month of March, as we in New England await the thawing, warmth of spring, may be just the time to find help or inspiration in a book borrowed from the Hospice Lending Library. What follows is a miscellany of stories (page 1) and quotations (page 2) from books to be found in our library. Please call, write, or email us about any books, videos or websites you would recommend to others who receive this newsletter. We also appreciate submissions of short book reviews, favorite passages or poems-- including ones you may have written-- for use in future issues of Seasons. Thank you and may something herein be of use to you.

~Elizabeth Pittman, Coordinator of Bereavement Care

### Colin's Hockey Save

My husband's brother passed away in a car accident when he was in high school. Every year, the private school he attended holds an ice hockey game in his honor. "The Colin McDonald Award" is presented afterwards, usually by the family. One year during the game, a puck was slammed full force into the stands. It was headed straight for my niece's head. My husband, among many others, reached out to deflect the puck. But it mysteriously disappeared and was never found! Just coincidence? We choose to believe it was Colin's lucky hockey save.

Excerpted from *Afterglow: Signs of Continued Love (Stories of Comforting Coincidences From Those Who Grieve)* by Karla Wheeler.

### The Legend of the Tear Jar

In the dry climate of ancient Greece, water was prized above all else. Giving up water from one's own body, when crying tears for the dead, was considered a sacrifice. They caught their precious tears in tiny pitchers or "tear jars" like the life-sized one shown here. These captured tears were considered to be "holy" water and could be sprinkled on doorways to keep out evil, or to cool the brow of a sick child.



The tear jars were kept plain and unpainted until the owner had experienced the death of a parent, sibling, child, or spouse. After that, the grieving person decorated the tear jar with intricate designs; examples of these can still be seen throughout modern Greece.

This ancient custom symbolizes the transformation that takes place in people who have grieved deeply. They have not so much "gotten over" their grief, but rather "grown through" it. They appreciate relationships more. They appreciate life more. They find meaning in little things. They have been in the depths of pain themselves, and [have] returned, [changed.]

From *Sibling Grief: Healing after the Death of a Sister or Brother* by P. Gill White, Ph. D., Director, The Sibling Connection. Courtesy of <http://www.counselingstlouis.net/>

"Trying to put my pain behind brought me to many dead ends. . . Sometimes I wondered if I was losing my mind. The old rules did not apply anymore. I felt as if I had been dropped by parachute into a different country where I had no map and everyone spoke a foreign language." Cathleen L. Curry, *When Your Spouse Dies*, as quoted in *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: surviving, coping and healing after the sudden death of a loved one* by Brook Noel & Pamela D. Blair, Ph.D. This book addresses unexpected deaths and has a great Resource section at the end.

"At other times, it feels like being mildly drunk, or concussed. There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me. I find it hard to take in what anyone says." *A Grief Observed* by C. S. Lewis, written after his wife died of cancer.

What piece of knowledge or wisdom did your loved one give to you? How has it impacted your life? How do you intend to use it in the future? *Don't Let Death Ruin Your Life: A Practical Guide to Reclaiming Happiness after the Death of a Loved One* by Jill Brooke.

## Hospice Lending Library

The Library at our 191 Canal street office has a collection of over 650 books, CDs, DVDs, and audio or videotapes for all ages. Browse and borrow during office hours Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm (and often later.) Books quoted in this issue are available for checkout.



### *Books For Children & Teens & The Grown-ups Who Love Them*

*Talking With Children About Loss: Words, Strategies, and Wisdom to Help Children Cope with Death, Divorce, and Other Difficult times* by Maria Trozzi, Director of the Good Grief program at Boston Medical Center. This useful book has an annotated bibliography appended.

"It's still hard for me to believe it's really happened. Sometimes when I'm reading a book I'll forget and then all of a sudden I stop and remember." Laurie Marshall, age 12 in *How It Feels When A Parent Dies* by Jill Krementz.

*Chill & Spill*, An Art-with-Heart Publication, by Steffanie Lorig & Jeanean Jacobs is a guided journal that was designed especially for youth dealing with stress, anxiety or trauma, because of illness, familial dysfunction, grief and loss, etc. Each of its activities' pages was designed by a different artist-illustrator. A copy of this journal, created for middle-schoolers and teens, is located in Elizabeth's office. To take a look at it, call her at 257-0775 x104.

## The Good Grief Program Expressive Arts Support Groups for Children and Teens



Using a range of activities – drawing, sculpture, collage, photography, writing, movement and music – participants find safe, creative ways to explore questions, thoughts and feelings with others their age who have experienced the death of a significant person. A group for four or more elementary school children will be held at the hospice office this spring when interested parents contact Elizabeth Ungerleider at 258-0763 or Elizabeth Pittman at 257-0775 x104. Elizabeth Ungerleider facilitates these free-of-charge sessions.

## *Bereavement Support Activities*

**Bereavement Support Groups** offer a safe, mutually supportive environment in which to share stories and experiences and explore the changes in our lives due to loss and grief. Groups are free of charge and meet at our 191 Canal Street office. Please call Elizabeth at 257-0775 x104 for further information or to make a pre-group meeting appointment for any of the groups listed below.

**\*\*NEW \*\*Mourning Pages, A 4-Week Writing Group for Adults, Fridays, March 4 – 25, 9-10:30am.**

Facilitated by Elizabeth Pittman; **Call Elizabeth to register.**

### THE FOLLOWING ONGOING GROUPS MEET YEAR-ROUND

Dates Shown Are For Current 2 Month Period

**Bereaved Parents Support Group** meets 6:30-8 pm, the 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month, March 14 & 28 and April 11 & 25. Facilitated by Lynn Martin.

**Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group** meets from 5:00-6:30 pm, the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month, March 9 & 23 and April 13 & 27. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.

**Suicide Loss Support Group** meets from 5:30-7 pm, the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month, March 2 & 16, April 6 & 20, facilitated by Andrea Edwards. This group co-sponsored by The Samaritans, Inc.

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

*Individual and family support is also available with trained bereavement volunteers and staff.  
Please call Elizabeth or Muriel for more information, an appointment, or just a listening ear.*

***Art Helps the Heart*** is taking a two month hiatus.

Join us in May for our annual Making of Remembrance Flags for the memorial garden.

## **Living With Grief®: Spirituality and End-of-Life Care**

Wednesday, April 13, 1:30- 5:00 PM

Marlboro College Graduate Center, 28 Vernon St. (Rte 142 South), Brattleboro

HFA's 2011 Teleconference *Spirituality and End-of-Life Care*, will underline differences between spirituality and religion, while also addressing spirituality during illness, death and grief. Additionally it will consider spiritual assessment and empowerment, as well as life review.

Doors open at 1:00 and light refreshments will be served. The program starts promptly at 1:30 and, at 4:00 a panel of local professionals will comment and take questions.

This program is free and open to the public. The Graduate Center is located on the second floor of the Technology Center next to the Brattleboro Art Museum. As seating is limited, call Brattleboro Area Hospice at 257-0775 to register for this event.

**Co-sponsored by Brattleboro Area Hospice and Marlboro College Graduate Center**

*Shared joy is double joy; shared sorrow is half-sorrow. ~Swedish proverb*

Brattleboro Area Hospice  
Bereavement Program  
191 Canal Street  
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

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### *Seasons Mailing List*

To add or remove a name,  
please call or email Shirley

### *Coming This Summer*

***Camp Knock Knock***, a weekend camp for families with children and/or teens who have experienced the death of a loved one, will be held June 3-5, 2011 at YMCA's Camp Abnaki in North Hero, Vermont. For more information or to register please call Ally Parker at 802-860-4410 x3405. Or call Elizabeth or Muriel at 257-0775 for a brochure or further information.

***Circle of Tapawingo, August 21-26, 2011 in southwestern Maine*** is a tuition-free overnight camp for girls 8-12 years old who have experienced the death of a parent. To register, call Cathy Spear, Director of Camper Services, 781-820-3388. For more information, check [www.circleoftapawingo.org](http://www.circleoftapawingo.org).



### *Mark Your Calendar: Memorial Planting Service* *Sunday Afternoon, June 5, 2011*

Details in May-June 2011 issue of SEASONS

Elizabeth Evans Pittman, Bereavement Care Coordinator  
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