



HORIZON

Living with loss

A PUBLICATION OF HOSPICE OF THE PIEDMONT

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS WITHOUT YOUR LOVED ONE

Being without your loved one, although difficult during all times of the year, is especially stressful and sad during the holiday season. Holidays are a time of family reunions and traditions, exchanging gifts with friends, and other miscellaneous rituals that don't seem to mean much without your loved one.

For many, the anticipation of the coming holidays is actually more difficult than the holiday itself. People often feel a lot of pressure from others to carry on all their formal traditions when they are not sure if they really want to. They may also feel guilty if they go about changing these family rituals and may even feel disloyal to the person who died.

Traditions do bind your family and friends in a special way, but changing your plans and traditions to meet your current needs makes a lot of sense. Your traditions may bring you a lot of comfort and pleasure. They may also magnify or intensify your loss. It is for you to decide if you want to make some changes or not. Since your loved one's death, what felt right before may not feel right now.

Your own expectations can also cause you problems. Make sure you are not demanding too much of yourself. Ask yourself, "Is this an activity or task I really enjoy?" And, "Would the holidays be the holidays without it?" You are unique! What worked for someone else may not feel right for you, so trust yourself.



Also, let your needs be known to your family, friends, and co-workers. Ask for and accept their help. Give yourself permission to be an active or inactive participant in holiday festivities, depending on your own feelings and energy level. Do not be afraid to change your mind at the last minute.

It might be important for your family to include your loved one in the holi-

day season through various memorials. For example, you may want to buy a small live tree and plant it outside in the spring as a living memorial. Or, you may want to create a special ornament or wreath for your loved one. Also, leave a photo album (with pictures of your loved one) open on your coffee table. Everyone is missing and thinking about him or her. The pictures give them permission to share their thoughts, feelings, and memories. Each of these memorials is a way to say, "I miss you and you will not be forgotten."

Remember, during the holidays, take care of yourself by planning and allowing yourself to make some changes if you choose. Also remember that you do not have to prove how much you miss your loved one by being totally miserable. Allow yourself to feel all your feelings, including happy moments, during the holiday season.

See page 3 to learn about Hospice of the Piedmont's 4-week Holiday Support Workshop Series.

*adapted from an article by
Judi Burkhart, M. Ed.*

GIFTS FROM A BROKEN HEART

by Laurie Haan Bayma, MS RN
Hospice of the Piedmont Bereavement Coordinator

A variety of events or stresses can lead someone to either look forward to or conversely dread the holiday season. Those who are leery of the approaching holidays because of a recent loss are not alone. With thousands of Americans serving in the Armed Forces, or displaced by natural disasters, many families are living not knowing how their loved one is or even where they are. With the high divorce rate, many families are not together “as they once were.” And with our nation's current economic situation, many people are struggling to make ends meet, facing loss of employment, or loss of a home.

These are difficult times, but they are accompanied by opportunities. The ability to see opportunities when one is grieving varies largely depending upon where one is in the grief process. For those who are in the early stages of grief, when the loss is intense, there might not be time, energy or room to see beyond the pain. These experiences are normal, but know that there will be a time in the future when the pain will lessen to make room for hope and new opportunities.

For those who are further along in the grief process, thinking of doing something for others this year may be ideal. This holiday season could offer an opportunity for gifts “of the heart” that

ultimately fill a place in a broken heart and add some light to what may seem a dark holiday season.

Volunteering for an organization that reaches out to the needy may be just the thing for the grieving heart, providing a reason to get out of the house, respite from thoughts of worry and loss, and opportunities to focus on something outside the self. Letter writing and gift giving for service men and women could be done right from home, as could knitting hats or blankets for premature infants, or making telephone calls to homebound individuals. There are endless organizations needing extra help around the holidays. Local newspapers and your Chamber of Commerce can be a great assistance in finding places that need volunteers.

The main goal of any of these activities would be to give help to someone who is suffering. The resulting “gifts” from this generous offer of help could come in many sizes and shapes, not the least of which would be taking a needed and well-deserved break from feeling the pain in one's own heart. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “When it is dark enough, you can see the stars.”

Journeys Program Celebrates 10 Years of Service

Ten years ago in November 2000, Stephanie Wilson began her employment with Hospice of the Piedmont as an Art Therapist and started a new bereavement program for children and teens called Journeys. Who knew this “journey” would include adding a second Art Therapist, Kacie Karafa, in June 2001 and Laurie Haan Bayma, Bereavement Coordinator, in July 2008! While the initial work was in homes, the work quickly spread to schools and into the community, including seasonal camps.

The Journeys program provides support to children and teens before the death of a loved one, and to the whole family after the death of a loved one. Services are available whether or not the loved one received care from Hospice of the Piedmont. Group work is the mainstay of the program, both with children and teens in schools and with the whole family at the office. Individual work is done in the home, school or office, depending on need. There are participants that attend Journeys programs for a short time and other's may attend for extended periods - even more than a year. Children and teens may return again and again as they grow developmentally and face new social and emotional challenges.

We enjoy a great relationship with Camps in the area - Triple C, Friendship and Holiday Trails. Thanks to donations from local restaurants, including Papa John's, Sticks, Canes, Bodos and Vocelli, families enjoy a light dinner before group at the office.

Stephanie and Kacie have fond memories of the hundreds of children and teens they have served and appreciate how the uniqueness of each child adds a rich dimension to their work. The program continues to grow annually. In the last fiscal year the number of children and teens served grew from 127 to 172 and contacts grew from 317 to 729. Fifty-seven parents were served, with 186 parent contacts made.

**So, Happy Anniversary, Journeys!!!
Keep up the great work!!!**

Providing Support & Guidance through the Holidays

“It’s not a choice of pain or no pain, but how you manage the pain on this special day.” -Rabbi Earl A. Grollman

Hospice of the Piedmont is offering it’s annual Holiday Grief Workshop Series, to take a closer look at ways to manage the holidays for those who grieve. The sessions will allow for a more in-depth discussion of the topics below:

low energy and even difficulty concentrating. Come to the “Traditions” session to begin to sort out what will and will not work for you this year and explore how to create your own personal approach to the holiday season.



Session 1 – Holiday Grief Survival Guide – Grieving people are often apprehensive about the holidays, wondering, “How will I hold up?” Come to hear tips and strategies for not just get-

Session 3 - Honoring the Memory of Loved Ones – During the holidays there is an abundance of laughing, happy people and one might think, “Don’t they know someone special has died?” The holidays can heighten that feeling that others have moved on, that your loss and your loved one have been forgotten. The reality is that you will never forget and you will remember your loved one especially around the holidays. This session explores the importance of remembering loved ones and ways of doing this on special days.

are opportunities as well. This session explores ways to move forward, set realistic goals, and find meaning and purpose in life again.

We look forward to seeing you at one or more of our Holiday Grief Workshop Sessions. Please see the enclosed Bereavement Calendar of Events for dates and times. Call the Bereavement Department for more information and to register.



ting through the holidays, but possibly finding meaning and comfort during this difficult period.

Session 2 – Traditions: Keeping the Old or Creating the New – Some ask, “What should I do to acknowledge these first special days without my loved one?” There is sometimes pressure to create or take part in all of the holiday festivities as usual. For most, this is not a realistic expectation because some reactions to grief can be low mood,

Session 4 – Facing a New Year The New Year is historically a time for making plans for the future, which could be difficult if your plans were supposed to include your loved one. And how does one look to the future, while being drawn back to the past and memories, which is a normal and healthy part of grieving? Entering into the New Year can be a challenge, but there



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HOSPICE OF THE PIEDMONT

Holiday Edition

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
PERMIT # 320

This beautiful, nondenominational, candlelit service is open to the public and provides a meaningful opportunity to celebrate those whose lives you've shared.

Lights will be lit at the Memorial Illumination ceremony and a symbolic light will stay lit until the New Year.

YOU ARE INVITED:
LIGHT A LIGHT, CELEBRATE A LIFE

DECEMBER 9, 2010
6:30 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

UNDER COVER OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE PAVILION

Parking available at the LexisNexis parking garage behind the Pavilion

*For more information, or to learn how you can donate a light, contact Hospice of the Piedmont:
(434) 817-6900—www.hopva.org*

memorial
Illumination

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF LIFE
SPONSORED BY HOSPICE OF THE PIEDMONT