



WELCOME WINTER

Eileen Stanzione, LCSW-C, PhD
Family Services Director

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Welcome to the Hospice of Washington County, Inc.'s Bereavement Department Newsletter. Since the last newsletter, we have hired another Per Diem Bereavement Care Specialist, JoAnn Sheffield. JoAnn has been an intern with our department for the last five months. She proved to be so valuable, with her bubbly personality, persistence and skill, that we decided we couldn't let her go! Welcome, JoAnn!

We also have a student intern, Krista Mills, who is also proving to be an asset to our department. Krista is earning her Bachelors in Social Work from Salisbury University. She has worked for ten years in the mental health field and has been drawn to hospice work. Welcome Krista!

The rest of the Bereavement Department staff remains the same: Will Perks, LCSW, our group specialist; Robin Morris, LCSW-C, our children and adolescent specialist; Amanda Witmer, LGSW, specializing in individual and group work with adults. I work with the Bereavement, Social Work and Spiritual Care Departments. Please see the back page for our up-coming events. Have a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Seasons Greetings

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES:

Our services are available to everyone in the community at no cost. We are proud of our Bereavement Care Specialists who are skillful and highly trained. We also offer individual counseling by appointment. For information on any of our groups or to register please call ahead at 301-791-6360 and ask for the Bereavement Department.

THE LOSS OF A PARENT

By Will Perks, LCSW
Bereavement Care Specialist

The loss of a parent can come at any time. I know a man whose father died before his own birth. My own father died when I was 16 years old. The cause of a parent's death can vary as much as the age range when it occurs.

In many ways, the story of every individual begins with the story of his or her parent. Their relationship is influenced by the many events and interactions they have shared over the years. These experiences come to characterize what that relationship means for the child and for the parent.

For anyone, the process of mourning a parent can become complicated if the death was sudden, if the relationship was characterized by tension, and if conflicts in the family continued after the death. Even so, healing can happen, with the work of grieving what was lost or what was never realized, yet hoped for.

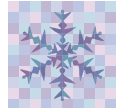
Asking for some guidance and support can be provided by a skilled counselor who is aware of the individual experience of grief and the resources available for support. It can take some time to sort through the tasks of mourning, but with patience and understanding for what grief is, the process can be less overwhelming. If you would like to talk to someone about any type of death-related loss, call the Bereavement Care Services Team at Hospice of Washington County, Inc. for a confidential consultation. There is no charge for our services.

I WILL LIGHT CANDLES THIS CHRISTMAS

By Howard Thurman



I will light Candles this Christmas;
 Candles of joy despite all sadness,
 Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
 Candles of courage for fears ever present,
 Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
 Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
 Candles of love to inspire all my living,
 Candles that will burn all the year long.



NEW SIX WEEK SUPPORT GROUP FOR 2012

We will be starting a new six-week support group for **Loss of a Parent** on January 10, 2012. This group will meet once a week for six weeks. Please call 301-791-6360 to register or for more information.

WINTERTIME BLUES AND GRIEF

Eileen Stanzione, LCSW-C, PhD
 Family Services Director

**" A friend is what the
 heart needs all the
 time"**

Henry Van Dyke

As we enter the winter season, we are often painfully aware of the lack of light and, correspondingly, the shorter day. For many who work, it feels as if we are going to work in the dark and leaving work in the dark. For those who don't work, we may feel constricted as we have a heightened awareness of weather forecasts and, often dangerous road conditions. These seasonal limitations may create a feeling of helplessness, often coupled with forgetfulness, an energy slump, and a craving for carbohydrates.

When we combine the wintertime blues with grieving, we may have an additional issue. During winter, people who are grieving, in addition to feeling fatigued, etc., may also experience feelings of hopelessness, may be guilt-ridden, and/or have difficulty thinking and making decisions. How can we help ourselves or others who may be feeling this way? Create ways to memorialize your loved one. Go through family pictures, label them and place them in albums. Tell others your favorite stories about your loved one. Rent some TV and movie classics that your loved one may have enjoyed. Adopt a cause and make a difference. Human needs don't take the winter off. Use the winter months as a time to reconnect-whether it be with those who are living or memorializing those who have died.



GIVING THE GIFT OF PRESENCE

As we approach the upcoming holiday season many Grandparents, Parents, Aunts, Uncles and Caregivers are far more economically stressed than ever. The desire to please our children and family members is often coupled with the dire need to balance our budgets. This can take the joy out of the most joyous time of the year.

As I reflect upon comments made to me by the numerous child and adolescent survivors of loss, I can honestly convey that, at the end of the day, our children, with all their innocence and wisdom, prefer the sounds of our voices, the warmth of our hugs and the fellowship with our spirits over and above the package they open on any given morning.

Giving your attention and your presence of mind, body and spirit are special gifts. They are forever cherished, forever appreciated and forever remembered by our loved ones, and most importantly, our children.

I sincerely wish you and yours, a healthy and peaceful Holiday Season!!

Robin D. Morris, MSW, LCSW-C

Bereavement Care Specialist



Gifts of time and love are surely
the basic ingredients of a truly
merry Christmas~

Peg Braken



SURVIVING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Amanda Witmer, LGSW
Bereavement Care Specialist

I recently heard a grieving person say they wished they could crawl into bed, slip under the covers, and not come out until the holidays were over. The holiday season often greatly heightens our awareness of the absence of our loved ones. Here are a few survival tips:

PLAN AHEAD: Change your holiday practices to match your mood and circumstances. For example, if you typically host events or dinners at your home, decide if it makes sense for someone else to host the events, or for the family to go out to eat instead.

ESTABLISH NEW TRADITIONS: Talk about your memories of your loved one with other family members who may also be grieving. You may choose to light a candle of remembrance or display photos or create a memory book. You may also choose to volunteer somewhere that was important to your loved one.

PRACTICE SELF CARE: Try to get enough rest, eat healthy foods, and exercise. Treat yourself to a massage, a warm bath, or a cup of hot tea when feeling stressed. Learn to say, "No" when you feel overwhelmed with too many invitations and activities. Continue to seek support and talk with someone about your feelings throughout the holiday season.

For more ideas on how to cope with the holidays please contact our Bereavement Department at Hospice of Washington County, Inc. at 301-791-6360 or register to attend our Coping with Grief at the Holidays Workshop on December 20, 2011 at 6:00 PM.

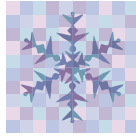
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Visit us on the web

www.hospiceofwc.org

"Embracing Life"

Memory is a way of holding onto the things you love,

The things you are, the things you never want to lose.

-From the TV show "*The Wonder Years*"

EVENTS OF INTEREST:

Coping with Grief at the Holidays.....December 20, 2011
Offered at 2:00 and 6:00 P.M. please call to register.

Loss of Spouse Support Group.....Held the second Thursday of each month from 6:00-7:30 P.M.

Healing Hearts.....Once a week for six weeks general grief support. These groups are always forming. Please call to register and for more information.

Loss of a Parent.....Held the first Thursday of each month from 6:00-7:30 beginning in 2012

TIMELY TOPICS COMING IN 2012

Cooking for One.....January 17, 2012

Finding Companionship.....February 21, 2012

Handling Financial Affairs.....March 20, 2012

Family Conflict Brought on by Grief.....April 17, 2012

You may call 301-791-6360 to register for any of the above groups or to get more information. Our office hours are 8:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. weekdays.

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