



## **Just Among Friends** **A Newsletter for Bereaved Persons**

**JANUARY & FEBRUARY, 2012**

The Bereavement Program is carried out by Hospice staff and a group of dedicated Hospice volunteers.

*As a Medicare certified hospice program, Hospice of Mercy is required to reach out to identified family members periodically in the 13 month period following the loved one's death. If at any time, you feel that this outreach is not necessary, or, for any reason you prefer that we not call, you may always request this.*

Bereavement support is offered to you completely free of charge. We are eager to serve and assist you through periodic contacts, individual counseling, as well as facilitated support groups. Don't hesitate to call your Hospice Social Worker (319-398-6496, M – F, 8:00 am to 4:30 p.m.) or the Bereavement Counselors, Barbara Koch and Vicki Finkstein, at 319-398-6735.



### **Bereavement Support Groups & Luncheon**

Each month, Hospice of Mercy offers support groups at various times. Our groups are small and informal. **The groups meet at The Dennis and Donna Oldorf Hospice House of Mercy, 315 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Hiawatha**, and are facilitated by hospice staff. A support group can be considered a "safe place" to share your experiences, and to hear how others are making their way on grief's journey.

**January support group topic:** Come and hear encouraging words related to "2012: A Fresh Start." We'll do some holiday de-briefing and then discuss the dimensions of your new life story.

**February support group topic:** "Bring Your Own Book" (or poem, meditation, quotes) and share how the written materials have helped you in your grief journey. Vicki and Barbara will share some of their favorite grief books as well. Together, we will create a new list of suggested bereavement resources.

**Morning Comfort & Conversation** meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. This group is for men and women grieving spousal, parental, or other death losses. This is a good opportunity to learn a bit about the experience of grief and to be assured that you are not alone.

**See you January 3 & February 7**

**Evening Comfort & Conversation** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. (Similar format to the Morning session.)

**See you January 17 and February 21**

**Younger Spouse Support Group** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. This group is for women only, age 65 and younger, who grieve the death of their spouse/partner.

**See you January 12 and February 9**

The **Bereavement Luncheon** is a monthly, noontime, Dutch-treat fellowship event for all. It is held at Ryan's at 230 Collins Rd. NE, Cedar Rapids. We have tables reserved especially for us, and you will be greeted by Hospice Staff.

**See you January 26 and February 23**



**You are invited to attend a special**

### **St. Valentine's Tribute to Those We Love** **at Hospice of Mercy**

**Sunday, February 12, 2012, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**

The first annual St. Valentine's Tribute is a gathering for any bereaved adult to celebrate the enduring nature of love. No matter who you grieve, the commercial aspects of St. Valentine's Day can intensify your feelings of loss. At our Tribute, we'll enjoy congenial fellowship, lovely refreshments, beautiful music, and inspiring stories.

**Space is limited for this free event ♥ Please call Vicki or Barbara at the Bereavement Office to reserve your place ♥ 319.398.6735**



**Griefshare** is a non-denominational support group that features biblical teaching on grief and recovery topics. Locally, there are several churches that offer this valuable program. For more information, go to [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) or call the Bereavement Office, 398-6735. *New groups forming in the New Year.*

**"A Season of Grief" Daily Emails** Griefshare offers free daily emails that provide encouragement and reminders related to the recovery process. Go to the Griefshare website (see above) for more information.

**LADOS** (Life After the Death of a Spouse) is a local group for widows and widowers. It meets at St. Mark's Faith & Life Center, 8300 C Ave. NE, Marion, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Sandie Allen at 393-3862.

**The Grief Journey** is an 8-week, curriculum-based support group presented by St. Luke's Hospice. The winter session will meet 8 Saturday mornings, 10 to 11:30 a.m., January 7 – February 25. Please call St. Luke's Hospice, 319-369-7744 to register for this free program.

**Web-based Resources:** Please refer to the on-line version of this newsletter for great information on helpful websites.  
[www.mercycare.org/hospice](http://www.mercycare.org/hospice) > resources > newsletter



## ***Mother Loss: Grieving Daughters***

**A grief education/support group created especially for adult women who, as adults, have lost their mother.**

Over the course of the 4 session series, participants will be afforded opportunities to more fully explore the impact of their mother's death, receive support, as well as discover strategies for their own growth and healing.

### **What participants have said about this group:**

*"It's nice to know that what I'm feeling is 'normal.' The other women were all so kind and considerate of each other's feelings. There was so much compassion."*

*"I was pleased that you offered this group to address this very special situation. I have found a real lack of understanding among others who have not been through the experience. There seems to be a real expectation of 'getting over it' quickly, especially if one's mother is of an advanced age."*

The ***Mother Loss*** group will meet at our Hiawatha office, **Sunday afternoons, 2 – 3:30 p.m., March 4, 11, 18, & 25.** Space is limited for this free class.

***Pre-registration is required by February 20.*** Please call the Bereavement Office at 398-6735 to complete the registration process. Thank-you!

## **I've Thought About Trying a Support Group....**

Does that describe you? You've been reading about our bereavement support groups, but have hesitated because you're not sure if it would be right for you, or you're worried that you might start to cry, or you think that no one wants to listen to your problems.

Our bereavement support groups are "safe places" to tell your story in the company of others who are coping with a similar loss. Bereaved people often feel that no one in their circle of family or friends really understands what they're going through. They can feel very isolated and alone. A support group can help to alleviate those feelings.

At the beginning of each meeting, the facilitator reminds

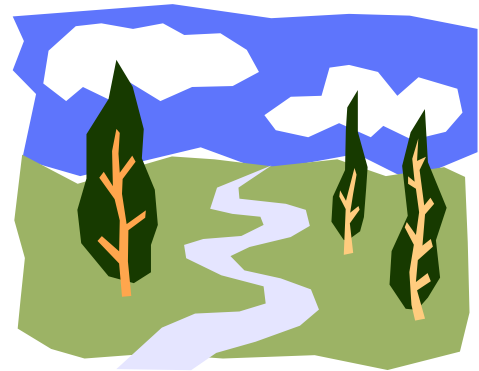
everyone that no one will be "forced" to talk. Some people will have difficulty sharing. It's OK to just sit and listen. No one will think less of you, because even if you aren't able to share, your very presence gives unspoken support to the others. We bring boxes of Kleenex to our meetings, because it's only natural that you might shed a tear as you share or as you listen to others.

Grief educator Marty Tousley describes a support group as

*"...a healing circle that helps members bear up under the heavy burden of loss without giving way. The group provides a safe, structured place where normal, healthy people bound by the experience of loss can come together on a regular basis to share their stories, get their concerns and feelings validated, learn more about the grieving process, express and work through their feelings, and reflect with one another on the meaning of it all. Members have the opportunity to grow by giving help as well as receiving it."*

If you have any questions about our Support Groups, please don't hesitate to call Barbara or Vicki at the Bereavement Office at Hospice of Mercy.

We often use these words from *The Servant Song* by Richard Gillard at our group meetings.



**We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are brothers and sisters on the road.  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.**

**I will weep when you are weeping.  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
We will share our joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through.**



## **Looking ahead to March, 2012**

**Morning Comfort & Conversation  
Mother Loss Series  
Younger Spouse  
Evening Comfort & Conversation  
Bereavement Luncheon**

**Tues. 3/06  
Sundays  
Thurs. 3/08  
Tues. 3/20  
Thurs. 3/22**

## Web-based Resources:

Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.

[www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com)

Click on “Someone I love has died” > Free articles for mourners. Specific information on coping with the death of a child, parent, spouse, or others.

[www.collegethrive.com/dealing-with-grief-as-a-college-student](http://www.collegethrive.com/dealing-with-grief-as-a-college-student)

[www.griefspeaks.com/id42](http://www.griefspeaks.com/id42) Short article touches on research on the experience of college aged bereaved; normal grief experiences; suicide prevention on college campus

Hospice Foundation of America

[www.hospicefoundation.org/educate-yourself](http://www.hospicefoundation.org/educate-yourself)

Scroll down and click on “Understanding Grief” for a 20 minute webinar on grief basics.

Non-profit, on-line bereavement support group:

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

[www.griefnet.org/library/articles/youngadults](http://www.griefnet.org/library/articles/youngadults)

A well written personal narrative

Grieving as a Family

Great information for families & children.

[www.sesameworkshop.org/grief](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/grief)

American Association of Retired Persons-AARP

[www.aarp.org/relationships/grief-loss](http://www.aarp.org/relationships/grief-loss)

Students of AMF For college students facing the serious illness/death of parents. Active chapters on college campuses.

[www.studentsofamf.org/grief-support-resources](http://www.studentsofamf.org/grief-support-resources)